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V O L. II.



THE
H I S T O R Y
O F
E N G L A N D,
F R O M

The EARLIEST TIMES to the DEATH
of GEORGE II.

By Dr. GOLDSMITH.

THE FOURTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N,

Printed for J. F. and C. RIVINGTON, B. LAW, RICHARDSON
and URQUHART, G. ROBINSON, T. CADELL, J. MURRAY,
T. EVANS, J. SEWELL, R. BALDWIN, S. HAYES, and
E. NEWBERY.

MDCCLXXXIV.

EXCELSIOR





C H A P. XIII.

E D W A R D. I.

WHILE the unfortunate Henry was thus vainly struggling against the ungovernable spirit of his subjects, his son and successor, Edward, was employed in the holy wars, where he revived the glory of the English name, and made the enemies of Christianity tremble. He had arrived at the city of Acon, in Palestine, just as the Saracens were fitting down to be-

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siege it. He soon relieved the place, followed the enemy, and obtained many victories, which, though splendid, were not decisive. Such, however, were the enemies terrors at the progress of his arms, that they resolved to destroy by treachery that valiant commander, whom they could not oppose in the field. A tribe of Mahometan enthusiasts had long taken possession of an inaccessible mountain in Syria, under the command of a petty prince, who went, in the Christian armies, under the name of the Old Man of the mountain, and whose subjects were called assassins; from whence we have since borrowed the name to signify a private stabber. These men, wholly devoted to their commander, and enflamed with a detestable superstition, undertook to destroy any Christian prince or leader, who became obnoxious to their party. It was vain to threaten them with punishment; they knew the dangers that awaited them, but, resolute to destroy, they rushed upon certain death. Some time before, the capital of this tribe had been taken by the Tartars, and the inhabitants put to the sword; yet there still remained numbers of them, that were educated in that gloomy school of superstition; and one of those undertook to murder the prince of England. In order to gain admittance



tance to Edward's presence, he pretended to have letters to deliver from the governor of Joppa, proposing a negociation ; and thus he was permitted to see the prince, who conversed with him freely in the French language, which the assassin understood. In this manner he continued to amuse him for some time, being permitted to have free egress and regress from the royal apartments. It was on the Friday in Whitsun-week, that he found Edward fitting in his apartment alone, in a loose garment, the weather being extremely hot. This was the opportunity the infidel had so long earnestly desired; and looking round to see if there were any present to prevent him, and finding him alone, he drew a dagger from his breast, and attempted to plunge it into the prince's bosom. Edward had just time to perceive the murderer's intention, and, with great presence of mind, received the blow upon his arm. Perceiving the assassin about to repeat his blow, he struck him at once to the ground with his foot; and wresting the weapon from his hand, buried it instantly in his bosom. The domestics hearing a noise, quickly came into the room, and soon wreaked their resentment on the perfidious wretch's body, who had thus abused the laws of hospitality. The wound the prince had re-

ceived was the more dangerous, as having been inflicted with a poisoned dagger; and it soon began to exhibit some symptoms that appeared fatal. He therefore expected his fate with great intrepidity, and made his will, contented to die in a cause which he was assured would procure him endless felicity. But his usual good fortune prevailed; an English surgeon of extraordinary skill, by making deep incisions, and cutting away the mortified parts, completed the cure, and restored him to health in little more than a fortnight. A recovery so unexpected, was considered by the superstitious army as miraculous; nor were there wanting some, who alledged that he owed his safety to the piety of Eleanora his wife, who sucked the poison from the wound, to save his life, at the hazard of her own. However this be, it is probable that the personal danger he incurred by continuing the war in Palestine, might induce him more readily to listen to terms of accommodation, which were proposed soon after by the soldan of Babylon. He received that monarch's ambassadors in a very honourable manner, and concluded a truce with him for ten years, ten weeks, and ten days. Having thus settled the affairs of Palestine, in the best manner they would admit of,

of, he set sail for Sicily, where he arrived in safety, and there first heard the news of the king his father's death, as well as that of his own son John, a boy of six years of age, He bore the last with resignation, but appeared extremely afflicted at the death of his father; at which, when the king of Sicily expressed his surprize, he observed that the death of a son was a loss which he might hope to repair, but that of a father was a loss irreparable.

Though the death of the king happened while the successor was so far from home, yet measures had been so well taken, that the crown was transferred with the greatest tranquillity. The high character acquired by the prince, during the late commotions, had procured him the esteem and affection of all ranks of men; and, instead of attempting to oppose, their whole wish was to see him once more returning in triumph. But the prince, sensible of the quiet state of the kingdom, did not seem in much haste to take possession of the throne; and he spent near a year in France, before he made his appearance in England. The honours he received from the great upon the continent; and the acclamations, with which he was every where attended by the people, were too al-

luring to a young mind to be suddenly relinquished : he was even tempted to exhibit proofs of his bravery in a tournament, to which he was invited by the count de Chalons, who defied him to a trial of his skill. Impressed with high ideas of the chivalry of the times, he accepted the challenge ; and proposed, with his knights, to hold the field against all that would enter the lists. His usual good fortune attended him ; and his success had like to have converted a trial of skill into a matter of bloody contention. The count de Chalons, enraged at being foiled, made a serious attack upon the English, in which some blood was idly spilt ; but Edward and his knights still maintained the superiority. From Chalons Edward proceeded to Paris, where he was magnificently entertained by Philip, king of France, to whom he did homage for the territories the kings of England had possessed in that kingdom. From Paris he set out for Gascony, to curb the insolence of Gaston, count Bearne, who had rebelled in his absence. From thence he passed through Montrœuil, where he accommodated some differences between the English and Flemings. At length, after various battles, dangers, and fatigues, he arrived in his native dominions,

amidst the loud acclamations of his people, and was solemnly crowned at Westminster by the archbishop of Canterbury. The joy of all ranks upon this occasion was inexpressible; the feasting continued a whole fortnight at the king's expence; five hundred horses were turned loose, as the property of those who could catch them. The king of Scotland, with several other princes, graced the solemnity; and did homage for those territories they held under the English crown. Nothing, therefore, remained to complete the felicity of the people but the continuance of such prosperity; and this they had every reason to expect from the king's justice, his œconomy, and his prudence.

As Edward was now come to an undisputed throne, the opposite interests were proportionably feeble. The barons were exhausted by long mutual dissensions: the clergy were divided in their interests, and agreed only in one point, to hate the pope, who had for some time drained them, with impunity: the people, by some insurrections against the convents, appear to have hated the clergy with equal animosity. These disagreeing orders only concurred in one point, that of esteeming and reverencing the king. In such a conjuncture,

therefore, few measures could be taken by the crown that would be deemed oppressive ; and we accordingly find the present monarch often, from his own authority alone, raising those taxes that would have been peremptorily refused to his predecessor. However, Edward was naturally prudent ; and, though capable of becoming absolute, he satisfied himself with moderate power, and laboured only to be terrible to his enemies.

His first care was to correct those disorders which had crept in, under the last part of his father's feeble administration. He proposed, by an exact distribution of justice, to give equal protection and redress to all the orders of the state. He took every opportunity to inspect the conduct of all his magistrates and judges, and to displace such as were negligent, or corrupt. In short ; a system of strict justice, marked with an air of severity, was pursued throughout his reign ; formidable to the people indeed, but yet adapted to the ungovernable licentiousness of the times. The Jews were the only part of his subjects who were refused that equal justice which the king made a boast of distributing. As Edward had been bred up in prejudices against them, and as these were still more confirmed by his expedition to the Holy

Land, he seemed to have no compassion upon their sufferings. Many were the arbitrary taxes levied upon them; two hundred and eighty of them were hanged at once, upon a charge of adulterating the coin of the kingdom; the goods of the rest were confiscated, and all of that religion utterly banished the kingdom. This severity was very grateful to the people, who hated the Jews, not only for their tenets, but for their method of living, which was by usury and extortion.

But Edward had too noble a spirit to be content with the applause this petty oppression acquired; he resolved to march against Llewellyn, prince of North Wales, who had refused to do homage for his dominions, and seemed bent upon renouncing all dependence upon the crown of England. The Welch had for many ages enjoyed their own laws, language, customs, and opinions. They were the remains of the ancient Britons, who had escaped the Roman and Saxon invasions, and still preserved their freedom and their country, uncontaminated by the admission of foreign conquerors. But as they were, from their number, incapable of withstanding their more powerful neighbours on the plain, their chief defence lay in their inaccessible mountains, those natural bulwarks

A.D. 1276. bulwarks of the country. Whenever England was distressed by factions at home, or its forces called off to wars abroad, the Welch made it a constant practice to pour in their irregular troops, and lay the open country waste wherever they came. Nothing could be more pernicious to a country than several neighbouring independent principalities, under different commanders, and pursuing different interests; the mutual jealousies of such were sure to harass the people; and wherever victory was purchased, it was always at the expence of the general welfare. Sensible of this, Edward had long wished to reduce that incurious people, and had ordered Lewellyn to do homage for his territories; which summons the Welch prince refused to obey, unless the king's own son should be delivered as a hostage for his safe return. The king was not displeased at this refusal, as it served to give him a pretext for his intended invasion. He therefore levied an army against Lewellyn, and marched into his country with certain assurance of success. Upon the approach of Edward, the Welch prince took refuge among the inaccessible mountains of Snowdon, and there resolved to maintain his ground, without trusting to the chance of a battle. These were the steep retreats, that had for many

many ages before defended his ancestors against all the attempts of the Norman and Saxon conquerors. But Edward, equally vigorous and cautious, having explored every part of his way, pierced into the very center of Lewellyn's territories, and approached the Welch army in its last retreats. Lewellyn at first little regarded the progress of an enemy, that he supposed would make a transient invasion, and then depart; but his contempt was turned into consternation, when he saw Edward place his forces at the foot of the mountains, and surround his army, in order to force it by famine. Destitute of magazines, and cooped up in a narrow corner of the country, without provisions for his troops, or pasture for his cattle, nothing remained but death, or submission; so that the unfortunate Welch prince, without being able to strike a blow for his independence, was at last, obliged to submit at discretion, and to receive such terms as the victor was pleased to impose. Lewellyn consented to pay fifty thousand pounds, as a satisfaction for damages; to do homage to the crown of England; to permit all other barons, except four near Snowdon, to swear fealty in the same manner; to relinquish the country between Cheshire and the river Conway; to do justice

justice to his own family, and to deliver hostages for the security of his submission.

A.D. 1271. But this treaty was only of short duration : the oppression of the conqueror, and the indignant pride of the conquered nation, could not long remain without producing new dissensions. The lords of the Marches committed all kinds of injustice on their Welch neighbours ; and although Edward remitted the fifty thousand pounds penalty, yet he laid other restrictions sometime after upon Lewellyn, which that prince considered as more injurious. He particularly exacted a promise from him at Worcester, that he would retain no person in his principality, that should be disagreeable to the English monarch. These were insults too great to be endured, and once more the Welch flew to arms. A body of their forces took the field, under the command of David, the brother of their prince, ravaged the plain country, took the castle of Harwardin, made sir Roger Clifford, justice of the Marches, who was very dangerously wounded, their prisoner, and soon after laid siege to the castle of Ruthland. When the account of these hostilities was brought to Edward, he assembled a numerous army, and set out with a fierce resolution to exterminate Lewellyn and his whole family ;

mily ; and to reduce that people to such an abject state, that they should never after be able to revolt, or distress their most peaceable neighbours. At first, however, the king's endeavours were not attended with their usual success ; having caused a bridge of boats to be laid over the river Menay, a body of forces, commanded by lord Latimer, and de Thonis, passed over before it was completely finished, to signalize their courage against the enemy. The Welch patiently remained in their fastnesses till they saw the tide flowing in beyond the end of the bridge, and thus cutting off the retreat of the assailants. It was then that they poured down from their mountains with hideous outcries ; and, with the most ungovernable fury, put the whole body that had got over to the sword. This defeat revived the sinking spirits of the Welch ; and it was now universally believed by that poor superstitious people that heaven had declared in their favour. A story ran, that it was foretold, in the prophecies of Merlin, that Lewellyn was to be the restorer of Brutus's empire in Britain : a wizzard had prognosticated, that he should ride through the streets of London with a crown upon his head. These were inducements sufficiently strong to persuade this prince to hazard a decisive battle

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battle against the English. With this view, he marched into Radnorshire; and passing the river Wey, his troops were surprised and defeated by Edward Mortimer, while he himself was absent from his army, upon a conference with some of the barons of that country. Upon his return, seeing the dreadful situation of his affairs, he ran desperately into the midst of the enemy, and quickly found that death he so ardently sought for. One of the English captains recognizing his countenance, severed his head from his body, and it was sent to London, where it was received with extreme demonstrations of joy. The brutal spirit of the times will sufficiently appear from the barbarity of the citizens on this occasion: the head being encircled in a silver coronet, to fulfil the prediction of the wizzard, it was placed by them upon a pillory, that the populace might glut their eyes with such an agreeable spectacle. David, the brother of this unfortunate prince, soon after shared the same fate; while his followers, quite dispirited by the loss of their beloved leader, obeyed but slowly, and fought with reluctance. Thus being at last totally abandoned, he was obliged to hide himself in one of the obscure caverns of the country; but his retreat being soon after discovered,

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he was taken, tried, and condemned, as a traitor. His sentence was executed with the most rigorous severity ; he was hanged, drawn and quartered, only for having bravely defended the expiring liberties of his native country, and his own hereditary possessions. With him expired the government, and the distinction of his nation. It was soon after united to the kingdom of England, made a principality, and given to the eldest son of the crown. Foreign conquests might add to the glory, but this added to the felicity of the kingdom. The Welch were now blended with the conquerors ; and in the revolution of a few ages, all national animosity was entirely forgotten.

At the time of the conquest, however, the Welch submitted with extreme reluctance ; and few nations ever bowed to a foreign yoke with greater indignation. The bards of the country, whose employment consisted in rehearsing the glorious deeds of their ancestors, were particularly obnoxious to the king, who, considering that while they continued to keep the ancient flame alive, he must expect no peace in his new acquisitions, ordered them to be massacred, from motives of barbarous policy, at that time not uncommon. This severity he is said to have softened by another measure,
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equally politic, and far less culpable. In order to flatter their vanity, and amuse their superstition, he left his queen to be delivered in the castle of Caernarvon; and afterwards presented the child, whose name was Edward, to the Welch lords, as a native of their country, and as their appointed prince. The lords received him with acclamations of joy, considering him as a master, who would govern them as a distinct people from the English, there being at that time another heir apparent to the English crown. But the death of the eldest son, Alphonso, soon after made young Edward, who had been thus created prince of Wales, heir also to the English monarchy; and ever since the government of both nations has continued to flow in one undivided channel.

This great and important conquest being atchieved, paved the way for one of still more importance, though not attended with such permanent consequences. Alexander III. king of Scotland, had been killed by a fall from his horse, leaving only Margaret, his granddaughter, heir to the crown, who died some time after. The death of this princess produced a most ardent dispute about the succession to the Scottish throne, being claimed by

no less than twelve competitors. That nation being thus divided into as many factions as there were pretenders, the guardians of the realm would not undertake to decide a dispute of so much consequence. The nobility of the country were no less divided in their opinions: and, after long debates, they at last unanimously agreed to refer the contest to the determination of the king of England. The claims of all the other candidates were reduced to three; who were the descendants of the earl of Huntingdon by three daughters; John Hastings, who claimed in right of his mother, as one of the co-heiresses of the crown; John Baliol, who alledged his right, as being descended from the eldest daughter, who was his grandmother; and Robert Bruce, who was the actual son of the second daughter. In this contest, which was referred to Edward, he pretended the utmost degree of deliberation; and although he had long formed his resolution, yet he ordered all enquiries to be made on the subject, that he might be master of the arguments that could be advanced on any side of the question. In this research, he soon discovered that some passages in old chronicles might be produced to favour his own secret inclinations; and, without farther delay, instead of admitting the

claims of the competitors, he boldly urged his own ; and, to second his pretensions, advanced with a formidable army to the frontiers of the kingdom.

The Scottish barons were thunderstruck at these unexpected pretensions ; and though they felt the most extreme indignation at his procedure, yet they resolved to obey his summons to meet at the castle of Norham ; a place situated on the southern banks of the Tweed, where he convened the parliament of that country. He there produced the proofs of his superiority, which he alledged were unquestionable, and desired their concurrence with his claims ; at the same time advising them to use deliberation, and to examine all his allegations with impartial justice. To a proposal that appeared in itself so unreasonable, no immediate answer could be given ; for where all is defective, it is not easy to submit to the combating a part : the barons, therefore, continued silent ; and Edward interpreting this for a consent, addressed himself to the several competitors to the crown ; and, previous to his appointing one of them as his vassal, he required their acknowledgement of his superiority. He naturally concluded that none of them would venture to disoblige the man who was unanimously

mously appointed to be the arbitrator of his pretensions. Nor was he deceived; he found them all equally obsequious on this occasion. Robert Bruce was the first who made the acknowledgement, and the rest quickly followed his example. Edward being thus become the superior of the kingdom, undertook next to consider which of the candidates was the fittest to be appointed under him; or it may be, as they appeared all indifferent to him, which had the justest claim. In order to give this deliberation the appearance of impartiality, a hundred commissioners were appointed, forty of them being chosen by the candidates who were in the interests of John Baliol: forty by those in the interests of Robert Bruce; and twenty, who were chosen by Edward himself. Having thus fitted matters to his satisfaction, he left the commissioners to sit at Berwick; and went southward, to free their deliberations from all shadow of restraint. The subject of the dispute ultimately rested in this question, Whether Baliol, who was descended from the elder sister, but farther removed by one degree, was to be preferred before Bruce, who was actually the younger sister's son? The rights of inheritance, as at present generally practised over Europe, were even at that time pretty

well ascertained ; and not only the commissioners, but many of the best lawyers of the age, universally concurred in affirming Baliol's superior claim. Edward, therefore, pronounced sentence in his favour ; and that candidate, upon renewing his oath of fealty to England, was put in possession of the Scottish kingdom, and all its fortresses, which had been previously put into the hands of the king of England.

Baliol being thus placed upon the Scottish throne, less as a king than as a vassal, Edward's first step was sufficient to convince that people of his intentions to stretch the prerogative to the utmost. Instead of gradually accustoming the Scots to bear the English yoke, and of sliding in his new power upon them by slow and imperceptible degrees, he began at once to give them notice of his intentions. A merchant of Gascony had presented a petition to him, importing, that Alexander, the late king of Scotland, was indebted to him a large sum, which was still unpaid, notwithstanding all his solicitations to Baliol, the present king, for payment; Edward eagerly embraced this opportunity of exercising his new right, and summoned the king of Scotland to appear at Westminster, to answer in person the merchant's complaint.

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Upon subjects equally trivial, he sent six different summonses, at different times, in one year; so that the poor Scottish king soon perceived that he was possessed of the name only, but not the authority of a sovereign. Willing, therefore, to shake off the yoke of so troublesome a master, Baliol revolted, and procured the pope's absolution from his former oaths of homage. To strengthen his hands still more, he entered into a secret treaty with Philip, king of France; which was the commencement of an union between these two nations, that, for so many succeeding ages, was fatal to the interests of England. To confirm this alliance, the king of Scotland stipulated a marriage between his eldest son, and the daughter of Philip de Valois.

Edward, to whom these transactions were no secret, endeavoured to ward the threatened blow, by being the first aggressor; and accordingly summoned John to perform the duty of a vassal, and to send him a supply of forces against an invasion from France, with which state he had for some time been at variance. He also summoned him to surrender some of his principal forts, and to appear at a parliament which was held at Newcastle. None of these commands, as he well foresaw, being

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complied with, he resolved to enforce obedience by marching a body of thirty thousand foot, and four thousand horse, into the heart of the kingdom of Scotland. As the Scottish nation had little reliance on the vigour, or the courage of their king, they had assigned him a council of twelve noblemen to assist, or, more properly speaking, to superintend his proceedings. They raised an army of forty thousand men for the present emergency, and marched them away to the frontiers, which Edward was now preparing to attack. But some of the most considerable of the Scottish nobility, among whom were Robert Bruce and his son, endeavoured to ingratiate themselves with Edward by an early submission, which served not a little to intimidate those who still adhered to their king. The progress, therefore, of the English arms was extremely rapid; Berwick was taken by assault; sir William Douglas, the governor, made prisoner, and a garrison of seven thousand men put to the sword. Elated by these advantages, Edward dispatched the earl Warenne, with ten thousand men, to lay siege to Dunbar; and the Scots sensible of the importance of that place, advanced with their whole army, under the command of the earls Mar, Buchan, and

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Lenox, to relieve it. Although the superiority of numbers was greatly on their side, yet courage and discipline was entirely on that of the English. The conflict was of short continuance; the Scots were soon thrown into confusion, and twenty thousand of their men were slain upon the field of battle. The castle of Dunbar, with all its garrison, surrendered the day following; and Edward, who was now come up with the main body of his army, led them onward into the country to certain conquest. The castles of the greatest strength and importance opened their gates to him almost without resistance; and the whole southern part of the country acknowledged the conqueror. The northern parts were not so easily reducible, being defended by the inaccessible mountains, and intricate forests, that deform the face of that country. To make himself master of this part of the kingdom, Edward reinforced his army with numbers of men levied in Ireland and Wales, who, being used to this kind of desultory war, were best qualified to seek, or pursue the latent enemy. But Baliol made these preparations unnecessary; he found that a ready submission was more safe and easy than a fierce resistance drawn out among mountainous deserts, and those solitudes, made

still more dreadful by famine. He hastened, therefore, to make his peace with the victor, and expressed the deepest repentance for his former disloyalty. To satisfy him still farther, he made a solemn resignation of the crown into his hands ; and the whole kingdom soon after followed his example. Edward, thus master of the kingdom, took every precaution to secure his title, and to abolish those distinctions, which might be apt to keep the nation in its former independence. He carefully destroyed all records and monuments of antiquity, that inspired the people with a spirit of national pride. He carried away a stone, which the traditions of the vulgar pretended to have been Jacob's pillow, on which all their kings were seated, when they were anointed. This, the ancient tradition had assured them, was the mark of their government ; and wherever it was placed, their command was always to follow. The great-seal of Baliol was broke ; and that unhappy monarch himself was carried as a prisoner to London, and committed to custody in the Tower. Two years afterwards he was restored to his liberty, and banished to France, where he died in a private station, without making any farther attempts to reinstate himself upon the throne ; happier perhaps in privacy than if gratified in the pursuits of ambition.

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The cessation which was given to Edward by those successes, in his insular dominions, induced him to turn his ambition to the continent, where he expected to recover a part of those territories that had been usurped from his crown, during the imbecility of his predecessors. There had been a rupture with France some time before, upon a very trifling occasion. A Norman and English ship met off the coast, near Bayonne ; and having both occasion to draw water from the same spring, there happened a quarrel for the preference. This scuffle, in which a Norman was slain, produced a complaint to the king of France, who desired the complainant to take his own revenge, and not bring such matters before him. This the Normans did shortly after : for seizing the crew of a ship in the Channel, they hanged a part of them, together with some dogs, in the presence of all their companions. This produced a retaliation from the English cinque-ports ; and the animosity of the merchants on both sides being wrought up to fury, the sea became a scene of piracy and murder. No quarter was given on either side ; the mariners were destroyed by thousands ; and at last the affair became too serious for the sovereigns of either side to continue any longer unconcerned spectators.

tators. Some ineffectual overtures were made for an accommodation : but Edward seeing that it was likely to come to an open rupture, gave orders for having his territory of Guienne, upon the continent, put into a posture of defence. Nor was he remiss in making treaties with several neighbouring princes, whose assistance he purchased, though greatly to the diminution of his scanty revenues. He even sent an army, collected in England from the jails, which have been filled with robbers in the former reign, and who were now made serviceable to the state. These, tho' at first successful, under the command of John de Bretagne, earl of Richmond, were, however, soon repulsed by the French army, under the command of Charles, brother to the king of France. Yet

A.D. 1296. it was not easy to discourage Edward from any favourite pursuit. In about three years after, he again renewed his attempts upon Guienne, and sent thither an army of seven thousand men, under the command of his brother, the earl of Lancaster. That prince gained, at first, some advantages over the French at Bourdeaux ; but he was soon after seized with a disorder, of which he died at Bayonne.

The king finding his attempts upon that quarter unsuccessful, resolved to attack France
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upon another, where he hoped that kingdom would be more vulnerable. He formed an alliance with John, earl of Holland, by giving him his daughter Elizabeth in marriage; and also with Guy, earl of Flanders, whose assistance he procured, for the stipulated sum of seventy-five thousand pounds. From these assistances he entertained hopes of being once more able to recover his hereditary dominions; and he accordingly set himself earnestly about providing money for such an arduous undertaking. This was not obtained without the greatest struggles with his clergy and the people; so that when he came to take the field in Flanders, at the head of an army of fifty-thousand men, the proper season of action was lost; wherefore the king of France and he were glad to come to an accommodation, by which they agreed to submit their differences to the arbitration of the pope. By his meditation it was agreed between them, that their union should be cemented with a double marriage; that of Edward with Margaret, Philip's sister; and that of the prince of Wales with Isabella, the French monarch's daughter. Philip was prevailed on to restore Guienne to the English. He agreed also, to abandon the king of Scotland, upon condition that Edward should

should in like manner neglect the earl of Flanders. Thus, after a very expensive war, the two monarchs were obliged to sit down just where they began; and, instead of making preparations against each other, they resolved to turn the weight of their power upon their weaker neighbours.

But though this expedition was thus fruitlessly terminated, yet the expences which were requisite for fitting it out, were not only burthensome to the king, but even, in the event, threatened to shake him on his throne. In order at first to set the great machine in movement, he raised considerable supplies by means of his parliament; and that august body was then first modelled by him into the form in which it continues to this day. As a great part of the property of the kingdom was now, by the introduction of commerce, and the improvement of agriculture, transferred from the barons to the lower classes of the people, so their consent was thought necessary for the raising any considerable supplies. For this reason, he issued writs to the sheriffs, enjoining them to send to parliament along with two knights of the shire (as in the former reign), two deputies from each borough within their county; and these provided with sufficient powers from their

their constituents, to grant such demands as they should think reasonable for the safety of the state. The charges of these deputies were to be borne by the borough which sent them; and so far were they from considering their deputation as an honour, nothing could be more displeasing to any borough than to be thus obliged to send a deputy, or to any individual than to be thus chosen. However, the authority of these commoners increased by time. Their union gave them weight; and it became customary among them, in return for the supplies which they had granted, to prefer petitions to the crown for the redress of those grievances, under which they supposed the nation to labour. The more the king's necessities increased, the more he found it expedient to give them an early redress, till from requesting, the commons proceeded to requiring; and, having all the property of the nation, they by degrees began to be possessed of the power. Such was the constitution of that parliament, to which Edward applied for assistance against France. He obtained from the barons and knights, a grant of the twelfth of their moveables; from the boroughs, an eighth; and from the clergy he resolved to exact a fifth: but he there found an unexpected resistance.

ance. This body of men, who had already felt the weight of his necessities, resolved to avail themselves of any pretext rather than thus submit to such a heavy and disproportioned imposition. The pope had some time before issued a bull, prohibiting the clergy from paying taxes to any temporal prince, without permission from the see of Rome; and those of England now pleaded conscience, in refusing to comply with the king's demand. They alledged, that they owed obedience to two sovereigns, a spiritual and a temporal; but that their eternal happiness bound them to obey one, while only their worldly safety led them to acknowledge the commands of the other. Edward was somewhat mortified at their refusal, but employed their own arguments with great force against them. He refused them his temporal protection, ordered his judges to receive no cause brought before them by the clergy, but to hear and decide all causes, in which they were defendants; to do every man justice against them; and to deny them justice even under the greatest injury.

In this outlawed situation, they suffered numberless hardships from every ruffian, while the king's officers remained unconcerned spectators of the ravages committed upon them, without incurring the hatred of oppressive

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or vindictive cruelty. Whenever the clergy ventured from home, they were dismounted from their horses, and robbed of their cloaths; the primate himself was attacked on the highway, and stripped of all his equipage and furniture. These severities, at length, prevailed; and the clergy agreed to lay the sums they were taxed in some church appointed them, which were to be taken away by the king's officers. Thus at once they obeyed the king, without incurring the censures of the pope. But though these sums were very great, yet they were by no means adequate to the wants of the state. New taxes were therefore arbitrarily imposed. Edward laid a duty of forty shillings a sack upon wool; he required the sheriffs of each county to supply him with two thousand quarters of wheat, and as many of oats, without considering the manner they were to be obtained. These he levied by way of loans, promising to pay an equivalent, whenever the exigences of the state were less pressing. Such various modes of oppression were not suffered without murmuring. The clergy were already disgusted to a man; the people complained at those extortions they could not resist; while many of the more powerful barons, jealous of their own privileges, as well as of national liberty,

liberty, gave countenance to the general discontent.

The first symptoms of this spirit of resistance appeared upon the king's ordering Humphry Bohun, the constable, and Roger Bigod, the mareschal of England, to take the command of an army that he proposed to send over into Gascony, while he himself intended to make a diversion on the side of Flanders. But these two powerful noblemen refused to obey his orders, alledging, that they were obliged by their offices to attend him only in the wars, and not to conduct his armies. A violent altercation ensued. The king, addressing himself to the constable, cried out, "Sir earl, by God, you shall either go or be hanged." To which the haughty baron replied. "Sir king, by God, I will neither go, nor be hanged." This opposition quite defeated his scheme for the conquest of Guienne. He found he had driven prerogative a little too far; and with that presence of mind which always brought him back, when he had the least gone beyond the line of discretion, he desired to be reconciled to his barons, to the church, and to his people. He therefore pleaded the urgent necessities of the crown; and promised, upon his return from Flanders, whither he was

then going, to redress all grievances, to restore the execution of the laws, and to make his subjects compensation for the loses which they had sustained. These professions served pretty well to allay the kindling discontents of the nation, during his absence abroad, except that the ensuing parliament only the two noblemen, attended by a great body of cavalry and infantry, took possession of the city gates, and obliged the king's council to sign the Magna Charta, and to add a clause, to secure the nation for ever against all impositions and taxes, without the consent of parliament. This the council readily agreed to sign; and the king himself, when it was sent over to him in Flanders, after some hesitation, thought proper to do the same. These concessions he again confirmed upon his return; and though it was probable he was averse to granting them, yet he was at last brought to give a plenary consent to all the articles that were demanded of him. Thus, after the contest of an age, the Magna Charta was finally established; nor was it the least circumstance in its favour, that is confirmation was procured from one of the greatest and boldest princes that ever swayed the English sceptre.

But though the confirmation of this charter was obtained without much violence, yet it is

A. D. 1297. probable, that the disturbance given by Scotland about the same time, might have hastened its final execution. That fierce nation, which had been conquered some time before with so much ease, still discovered a spirit of independence, that no severity could restrain, nor defeats subdue. The earl Warrene had been left justiciary in that kingdom ; and his prudence and moderation were equal to his valour. He therefore protected the people with his justice, as he had subdued them by his arms : but being obliged, by the bad state of his health, to leave that kingdom, he left the administration in the hands of two very improper ministers ; the one, whose name was Ormesby, was rigorous and cruel ; the other, called Cressingham, was avaricious and mean. Under such an administration little stability could be expected ; and their injustice soon drove this distressed people into open rebellion. A few of those who had fled into the most inaccessible mountains from the arms of Edward, took this opportunity to pour down, and strike for freedom. They were headed by William Wallace, so celebrated in Scottish story, the younger son of a gentleman, who lived in the western part of the kingdom. He was a man of gigantic stature, incredible

credible strength, and amazing intrepidity; eagerly desirous of independence, and possessed with the most disinterested spirit of patriotism. To this man had resorted all those who were obnoxious to the English government; the proud, the bold, the criminal, and the ambitious. These, bred among dangers and hardships themselves, could not forbear admiring in their leader a degree of patience, under fatigue and famine, which they supposed beyond the power of human nature to endure; he soon, therefore, became the principal object of their affection and their esteem. His first exploits were confined to petty ravages, and occasional attacks upon the English. As his forces increased, his efforts became more formidable; every day brought accounts of his great actions; his party was joined first by the desperate, and then by the enterprising; at last, all who loved their country came to take shelter under his protection. Thus reinforced, he formed a plan of surprising Ormesby, the unworthy English minister, who resided at Scone; but though this tyrant escaped the meditated irruption, yet his effects served to recompence the insurgents. From this time, the Scots began to grow too powerful for the

English that were appointed to govern them ; many of their principal barons joined the insurgents ; sir William Douglas was among the foremost openly to avow his attachment ; while Robert Bruce more secretly favoured and promoted the cause. To oppose this unexpected insurrection, the earl Warrene collected an army of forty thousand men in the North of England, and prepared to attack the Scots, who had by this time crossed the borders, and had begun to ravage the country. He suddenly entered Annandale, and came up with the enemy at Irvine, where he surprised their forces, who being inferior in number, capitulated, and promised to give hostages for their future fidelity. Most of the nobility renewed their oaths, and joined the English army with reluctance, waiting a more favourable occasion for vindicating their freedom. Wallace alone disdained submission ; but, with his faithful followers, marched northwards, with a full intention to protract the hour of slavery as long as he could. In the mean time, the earl Warrene advanced in the pursuit, and overtook him, where he was advantageously posted, in the neighbourhood of Stirling, on the other side of the river Forth. The earl

perceiving the favourable ground he had chosen was for declining the engagement ; but being pressed by Cressingham, a proud man, whose private revenge operated over his judgment, the old earl was at last obliged to comply, and he past over a part of his army to begin the attack. Wallace allowing such numbers of the English to get over as he thought himself superior to, boldly advanced upon them before they were completely formed, and put them entirely to the rout. Part of them were pursued into the river that lay in the rear, and the rest were cut to pieces. Among the slain was Cressingham himself, whose memory was so extremely odious to the Scots, that they fled his dead body, and made saddles of his skin. Warrene retired with the remains of his army to Berwick, while his pursuers took such castles as were but ill provided for a siege. Wallace returned into Scotland, after having thus, for a time, saved his country, laden with an immense plunder, with which he for a while dispelled the prospect of famine, that seemed to threaten the nation.

Edward, who had been over in Flanders, while these misfortunes happened in England, hastened back with impatience to restore his

A.D. 1297.

authority, and secure his former conquests. As the discontents of the people were not as yet entirely appeased, he took every popular measure that he thought would give them satisfaction. He restored to the citizens of London the power of electing their own magistrates, of which they had been deprived in the latter part of his father's reign. He ordered strict enquiries to be made concerning the quantity of corn, which he had arbitrarily seized for the use of his armies, as if he intended to pay the value to the owners. Thus having appeased, if not satisfied, all complaints, he levied the whole force of his dominions ; and at the head of a hundred thousand men, he directed his march to the North, fully resolved to take vengeance upon the Scots for their late defection.

It may easily be supposed, that the Scots, even if united, were but ill able to resist such an army, commanded by such a king ; but their own mutual dissensions served to render them still more unequal to the contest, and to prepare Edward's way to an easy triumph. The Scots were headed by three commanders, who each claimed an equal share of authority ; these were the steward of Scotland, Cummin

min of Badenoch, and William Wallace, who offered to give up his command, but whose party refused to follow any other leader. The Scotch army was posted at Falkirk, and there proposed to abide the assault of the English. They were drawn up in three separate divisions, each forming a complete body of pikemen, and the intervals filled up with archers. Their horse were placed in the rear, and their front were secured with palisadoes.

Edward, tho' he saw that the advantage of situation was against him, little regarded such a superiority, confident of his skill and his numbers; wherefore, dividing his forces also into three bodies, he led them to the attack. Just as he advanced at the head of his troops, the Scots set up such a shout, that the horse, upon which the king rode, took fright, threw and afterwards kicked him on the ribs, as he lay on the ground; but the intrepid monarch, though sorely bruised with his fall, quickly mounted again with his usual alacrity, and ordered the Welch troops to begin the attack. These made but a feeble resistance against the Scots, who fought with determined valour; but Edward seeing them begin to decline, he advanced in person at the head of another battalion; and having pulled up the

palisadoes, charged the enemy with such impetuosity, that they were no longer able to resist. In this distress, Wallace did all that lay in the power of man to sustain and avert the shock ; but the division commanded by Cummin quitting the field, both the divisions of the lord steward, as well as that of Wallace, lay exposed to the English archers, who at that time began to excel those of all other nations. Wallace, for a while, maintained an unequal contest with his pikemen ; but finding himself in danger of being surrounded, he was at last obliged to give way, and slowly to draw off the poor remnant of his troops behind the river Carron. Such was the famous battle of Falkirk, in which Edward gained a complete victory, leaving twelve thousand of the Scots, or as some will have it, fifty thousand, dead upon the field of battle, while the English had not a hundred slain.

A blow so dreadful, had not as yet entirely crushed the spirit of the Scotch nation ; and after a short interval, they began to breathe A.D. 1295. from their calamities. Wallace, who had gained all their regards by his valour, shewed that he still merited them more by his declining the rewards of ambition. Perceiving how much he was envied by the nobility, and knowing

knowing how prejudicial that envy would prove to the interests of his country, he resigned the regency of the kingdom, and humbled himself to a private station. He proposed Cummin as the properest person to supply his room; and that nobleman endeavoured to shew himself worthy of this pre-eminence. He soon began to annoy the enemy; and not content with a defensive war, he made incursions into the southern counties of the kingdom, which Edward had imagined wholly subdued. A.D. 1302.

They attacked an army of the English lying at Roslin, near Edinburgh, and gained a complete victory. The renown of the Scottish arms soon began to spread dismay among the English garrisons left in that kingdom; and they evacuated all the fortresses, of which they had for some time been put in possession. Thus once more the task of conquest was to be performed over again; and in proportion to their losses, the Scots seemed to gather fresh obstinacy.

But it was not easy for any circumstances of bad fortune to repress the enterprizing spirit of the king. He assembled a great fleet and army; and, entering the frontiers of Scotland, appeared with a force which the enemy could not think of resisting in the open field. The A.D. 1303. fleet

fleet furnished the land army with all necessary provisions ; while these marched securely along, and traversed the kingdom from one end to the other, ravaging the open country, taking all the castles, and receiving the submissions of all the nobles. This complete conquest, employed Edward for the space of two years ; but he seemed, by the severity of his conduct, to make the natives pay dear for the trouble to which they had put him. He abrogated all the Scottish laws and customs ; he endeavoured to substitute those of England in their place ; he entirely razed or destroyed all their monuments of antiquity ; and endeavoured to blot out even the memory of their former independence and freedom. There seemed to remain only one obstacle to the final destruction of the Scottish monarchy, and that was William Wallace, who still continued refractory ; and wandering with a few forces from mountain to mountain, still preserved his native independence and usual good fortune. But even their feeble hopes from him were soon disappointed ; he was betrayed into the king's hands by sir John Monteith, his friend, whom he had made acquainted with the place of his concealment, being surprised by him as he lay asleep in the neighbourhood of Glasgow.

gow. The king, willing to strike the Scots with an example of severity, ordered him to be conducted in chains to London, whither he was carried amidst infinite crowds of spectators, who flocked to see a man that had often filled the whole country with consternation. On the day after his arrival, he was brought to his trial, as a traitor, at Westminster-hall, where he was placed upon a high chair, and crowned with laurel in derision. Being accused of various imputed crimes, he pleaded not guilty, and refused to own the jurisdiction of the court, affirming, that it was equally unjust and absurd to charge him with treason against a prince whose title he had never acknowledged; and as he was born under the laws of another country, it was cruel to try him by those to which he was a stranger. The judges disregarded his defence; for considering Edward as the immediate sovereign of Scotland, they found him guilty of high-treason, and condemned him to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, the usual punishment for such offences. This sentence was executed with the most rigorous punctuality; and his head and quarters were exposed in the chief cities of England. Such was the wretched end of a brave man, who had, through a course of many years,

years, with signal perseverance and conduct, defended his native country against an unjust invader.

Robert Bruce was among those on whom the cruel fate of Wallace had made the deepest impression. This nobleman, whom we have already seen as competitor for the crown, and whose claims, though set aside by Edward, were still secretly pursued, was now actually in the English army. He never was sincerely attached to the English monarch, whom he was in some measure compelled to follow; and an interview with Wallace, some time before that champion was taken, confirmed him in his resolution to set his country free. But as he was now grown old and infirm, he was obliged to give up the flattering ambition of being the deliverer of his people, and to leave it in charge to his son, whose name was Robert Bruce also, and who received the project with ardour. This young nobleman was brave, active, and prudent, and a favourable conjuncture of circumstances seemed to conspire with his aims. John Baliol, whom Edward had dethroned, and banished into France, had lately died in that country; his eldest son continued a captive in the same place; there was none to dispute his pretensions, except Cummin, who was

was regent of the kingdom ; and he also was soon after brought over to second his interests. He therefore resolved upon freeing his country from the English yoke ; and although he attended the court of Edward, yet he began to make secret preparations for his intended revolt. Edward, who had been informed not only of his intentions, but of his actual engagements, contented himself with setting spies round him to watch his conduct, and ordered all his motions to be strictly guarded. Bruce was still busily employed in his endeavours, unconscious of being suspected, or even of having guardians set upon his conduct ; but he was taught to understand his danger, from a present sent him, by a young nobleman of his acquaintance, of a pair of gilt spurs, and a purse of gold. This he considered as a warning to make his escape, which he did, by ordering his horses to be shod with their shoes turned backwards, to prevent his being tracked in the snow, which had then fallen.

His dispatch was considered then as very great ; having travelled from London to Loachmaben, which is near four hundred miles, in seven days. Cummin, who had in the beginning concurred in his schemes, was privately known to have communicated the whole to Edward ;

A.D. 1306.

Edward; and Bruce was resolved, in the first place, to take vengeance upon him for his perfidy. Hearing that he was then at Dumfries, he went thither, and meeting him in the cloisters of a monastery belonging to the Grey Friars, reproached him, in severe terms, with his treachery; and drawing his sword, instantly plunged it in his breast. Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick, one of Bruce's friends, asking him soon after if the traitor was slain, and Bruce answering that he believed so, “what, replied the “other, only belief ; I will secure him ;” and going back to where Cummin was receiving absolution at the altar, he stabbed him to the heart. It is a disagreeable reflection, that actions begun in this manner should, nevertheless, terminate in success.

Bruce had by this action not only rendered himself the object of Edward's resentment, but involved all his party in the same guilt. They had now no resource left, but to confirm, by desperate valour, what they had begun in cruelty ; and they soon expelled such of the English forces, as had fixed themselves in the kingdom. Bruce was solemnly crowned king by the bishop of St. Andrew's, in the abbey of Scone ; and numbers flocked to his standard, resolved to confirm his pretensions,

fions. Thus, after twice conquering the kingdom, and as often pardoning the delinquents ; after having spread his victories in every quarter of the country, and receiving the most humble submissions, the old king saw, that his whole work was to begin afresh ; and that nothing but the final destruction of the inhabitants could give him assurance of tranquillity. But no difficulties could repress the arduous spirit of this monarch, who, tho' now verging towards his decline, yet resolved to strike a parting blow, and to make the Scots once more tremble at his appearance. He vowed revenge against the whole nation ; and averred, that nothing but reducing them to the completest bondage could satisfy his resentment. He summoned his prelates, nobility, and all who held by knights service to meet him at Carlisle, which was appointed as the general rendezvous ; and in the mean time, he detached a body of forces before him into Scotland, under the command of Aymer de Valence, who began the threatened infliction by a terrible victory over Bruce, near Methuen, in Perthshire. That warlike commander fought with great obstinacy ; he was thrice dismounted from his horse in the action, and as often recovered : but at last he was obliged to fly, and take shelter, with a few followers,

followers, in the Western Isles. The earl of Athol, sir Simon Fraser, and sir Christopher Seton, who had been taken prisoners, were executed as traitors on the spot. Immediately after this dreadful blow, the resentful king himself appeared in person, entering Scotland with his army divided into two parts, and expecting to find, in the opposition of the people, a pretext for punishing them. But this brave prince, who was never cruel but from motives of policy, could not strike the poor submitting natives, who made no resistance. His anger was disappointed in their humiliation ; and he was ashamed to extirpate those, who only opposed patience to his indignation. It was chiefly upon the nobles of the country that the weight of his resentment fell. The sister of Bruce, and the countess of Buchan, were shut up in wooden cages, and hung over the battlements of a fortress, and his two brothers fell by the hands of the executioner. The obstinacy of this commander served to inflame the king's resentment. He still continued to excite fresh commotions in the Highlands ; and, though often overcome, persisted in a seemingly fruitless opposition. Edward therefore, at last, resolved to give no quarter ; and at the head of a great army entered

entered Scotland, from whence he had lately retreated, resolving to exterminate the whole body of those insurgents, who seemed so implacably averse to his government. Nothing lay before the refractory Scots, but prospects of the most speedy and terrible vengeance ; while neither their valour, nor their mountains, were found to afford them any permanent protection. But Edward's death put an end to their apprehensions, and effectually rescued their country from total subjection. He sickened, and died at Carlisle, of a dysentery ; enjoining his son, with his last breath, to prosecute the enterprize, and never to desist till he had finally subdued the kingdom. He expired, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign : after having added more to the solid interests of the kingdom than any of those who went before, or since succeeded him. He was a promoter of the happiness of the people ; and seldom attempted exerting any arbitrary stretch of power, but with a prospect of increasing the welfare of his subjects. He was of a very majestic appearance, tall in stature, of regular features, with keen piercing black eyes, and an aspect that commanded reverence and esteem. His constitution was robust ; his strength and dexterity unequalled, and his

A. D. 1307.
July 7.

shape agreeable, except from the extreme length and smallness of his legs, from whence he had the appellation of Longshanks. He seemed to have united all those advantages which, in that age, might be considered as true glory. He gained renown by his piety in the Holy Land ; he fixed the limits of at justice home ; he confirmed the rights of the people ; he was the most expert at martial exercises of any man in the kingdom ; and was allowed to be a conqueror, by his success over the kingdom of Scotland. Succeeding times have, with great justice, questioned the merit of some of these claims ; but none can deny him comparative excellence, if they look upon those princes, who either went before, or have succeeded. Edward, by his first wife, Eleanor of Castile, had four sons, and eleven daughters ; of the last, most died young ; of the former, Edward the Second alone, his heir and successor, survived him.

If we turn to the state of the people during his administration, we shall find, that England acquired not only great power, but great happiness, under his protection. The barons, who might, during this period, be considered as a junto of petty tyrants, ready to cry out for liberty, which they alone were to share, were kept under ; and their combinations

bination were but feeble and ill supported. The monarch was in some measure absolute, though he was prudent enough not to exert his power. He was severe, indeed; and some people tax this severity as a stain upon his memory; but let it be remembered, that he was the first who began to distribute indiscriminate justice. Before his time, the people who rose in insurrections, were punished in the most cruel manner by the sword or the gibbet; while, at the same time, the nobility, who were really guilty, were treated with a degree of lenity, which encouraged them to fresh insurrections. But what gave Edward's reign a true value with posterity, was the degree of power, which the people began to assume during this period. The king considered the clergy and barons in some measure as rivals; and to weaken their force, he never attempted to controul the flow, but certain, advances made by the people, which in time, entirely destroyed the power of the one, and divided the authority of the other.



C H A P. XIII.

EDWARD II. surnamed of CAERNARVON.

THE pleasure which the people generally feel at the accession of a new prince, effaces their sorrow for the deceased; the faults of the one are known and hated, while the other, from novelty, receives imputed merit. Much, therefore, was expected from the young prince, and all orders hastened to take the oath of allegiance to him. He was now in the twenty-third

third year of his age, of an agreeable figure, of a mild harmless disposition, and apparently addicted to few vices. But he soon gave symptoms of his unfitness to succeed so great a monarch as his father ; he was rather fond of the enjoyment of his power, than of securing it ; and, lulled by the flattery of his courtiers, he thought he had done enough for glory, when he had accepted the crown. Instead, therefore, of prosecuting the war against Scotland, according to the injunctions he had received from his dying father, he took no steps to check the progress of Bruce ; his march into that country being rather a procession of pageantry, than a warlike expedition. Bruce, no longer dreading a great conqueror in the field, boldly issued from his retreats, and even obtained a considerable advantage over Aymer de Valence, who commanded the English forces. Young Edward looked tamely on ; and, instead of repressing the enemy, endeavoured to come to an accommodation. The English barons, who had been kept under during the preceding reign, now saw that the scepter was fallen into such feeble hands, that they might re-assert their former independence with impunity.

To confirm the inauspicious conjectures that were already formed of this reign, Edward recalled one of his favourites, who was banished during his father's reign, being accused of corrupting the prince's morals. The name of this much-loved youth was Piers Gavestone, the son of a Gascon knight, who had been employed in the service of the late king. This young man soon insinuated himself into the affections of the prince ; and, in fact, was adorned with every accomplishment of person and mind, that were capable of creating affection : but he was utterly destitute of those qualities of heart and understanding that serve to procure esteem. He was beautiful, witty, brave, and active ; but then he was vicious, effeminate, debauched, and trifling. These were qualities entirely adapted to the taste of the young monarch, and such as he could not think of living without. He therefore took Gavestone into his particular intimacy, and seemed to think no rewards equal to his deserts. Even before his arrival at court from exile, he endowed him with the whole earldom of Cornwal, which had lately fallen to the crown. He married him soon after to his own niece, and granted him a sum of two and thirty thousand pounds, which the late king

king had reserved for the maintenance of one hundred and forty knights, who had undertaken to carry his heart to Jerusalem.

These accumulated favours did not fail to excite the jealousy and indignation of the barons ; and Gavestone was no way solicitous to soften their resentment. Intoxicated with his power, he became haughty and overbearing. He treated the English nobility, from whom it is probable he received marks of contempt, with scorn and derision. Whenever there was to be a display of pomp or magnificence, Gavestone was sure to eclipse all others ; and he not only mortified his rivals by his superior splendour, but by his superior insolence.

The barons were soon after still more provoked to see this presumptuous favourite appointed guardian of the realm, during a journey the king was obliged to make to Paris, to espouse the princess Isabella, to whom he had been long since betrothed. They were not remiss, therefore, upon the arrival of this princess, who was imperious and intriguing, to make her of their party, and to direct her animosity against Gavestone, which, to do him justice, he took little care to avoid. A conspiracy was soon formed against him, at the head of which queen Isabella, and the earl of

Lancaster, a nobleman of great power, were associated. They bound themselves by oath to expel Gaveston ; and began to throw off all reverence for the royal authority, which they saw wholly in the possession of this overgrown favourite. At length, the king found himself obliged to submit to their united clamour ; and he sent Gaveston out of the kingdom, by appointing him lord-lieutenant of Ireland. But this compliance was of short duration ; the weak monarch, long habituated to his favourite, could not live without him ; and having obtained a dispensation from the pope for his breach of faith, he once more recalled Gaveston, and even went down to Chester to receive him on his first landing from Ireland. A parliament was soon after assembled, where the king had influence sufficient to have his late conduct approved ; and this served only to increase his ridiculous affection, and to render Gaveston still more odious. This infatuated creature himself forgetting his past misfortunes, and unmindful of future danger, resumed his former ostentation and insolence, and made himself every day some new enemy.

It was easy to perceive, that a combination of the nobles, while the queen secretly assisted their

their designs, would be too powerful against the efforts of a weak king, and a vain favourite. They were resolved upon the fall of Gaveston, even though that of Edward himself should be involved in the same ruin. They soon, therefore, assembled, in a tumultuary parliament, contrary to the king's express command, attended with a numerous retinue of armed followers; and began their first usurpation, by giving laws to the king. They compelled him to sign a commission, by which the whole authority of government was to be delegated to twelve persons, to be chosen by themselves. These were to have the government of the kingdom, and the regulation of the king's household. They were to enact ordinances for the good of the state, and the honour of the king; their commission was to continue for six months, and then they were to lay down their authority. Many of their ordinances were accordingly put in force, and some of them appeared for the advantage of the nation; such as the requiring that the sheriffs should be men of property; the prohibiting the adulteration of the coin; the excluding foreigners from farming the revenues; and the revoking all the late exorbitant grants of the crown. All these the king, who saw himself entirely stript of his power,

A. D. 1308.
March 16.

could

could very patiently submit to ; but when he learned that Gavestone was to be banished for ever from his dominions, he no longer was master of his temper ; but removing to York, where he was at a small distance from the immediate terror of the confederated power, he instantly invited Gavestone back from Flanders, whither the barons had banished him ; and declaring his punishment and sentence to be illegal, he openly reinstated him in all his former splendours. This was sufficient to spread an alarm over the whole kingdom ; all the great barons flew to arms ; the earl of Lancaster put himself at the head of this irresistible confederacy ; Guy, earl of Warwick, entered into it with fury ; the earl of Hereford, the earl of Pembroke, and the earl Warenne, all embraced the same cause ; whilst the archbishop of Canterbury brought over the majority of the ecclesiastics, and consequently of the people. The unhappy Edward, instead of attempting to make resistance, sought only for safety : ever happy in the company of his favourite, he embarked at Tinmouth, and sailed with him to the castle of Scarborough, where he left Gavestone, as in a place of safety ; and then went back to York himself, either to raise an army to oppose his enemies ; or, by his presence, to allay their

their animosity. In the mean time, Gaveston was besieged in Scarborough by the earl of Pembroke ; and had the garrison been sufficiently supplied with provisions, that place would have been impregnable. But Gaveston, sensible of the bad condition of the garrison, took the earliest opportunity to offer terms of capitulation. He stipulated, that he should remain in Pembroke's hands as a prisoner for two months ; and that endeavours should be used, in the mean time, for a general accommodation. But Pembroke had no intention that he should escape so easily ; he ordered him to be conducted to the castle of Deddington, near Banbury, where, on pretence of other business, he left him with a feeble guard, which the earl of Warwick having notice of, he attacked the castle in which the unfortunate Gaveston was confined, and quickly made himself master of his person. The earls of Lancaster, Hereford, and Arundel, were soon apprised of Warwick's success, and informed that their common enemy was now in custody at Warwick castle. Thither, therefore, they hastened with the utmost expedition, to hold a consultation upon the fate of their prisoner. This was of no long continuance ; they unanimously resolved to put him to death, as an enemy to the kingdom,

dom, and gave him no time to prepare for his execution. They instantly had him conveyed to a place called Blacklowhill, where a Welch executioner, provided for that purpose, severed the head from the body. There appeared a deeper spirit of cruelty now entering into the nation than had been known in times of barbarity and ignorance. It is probable, that the mutual slaughters committed by the Christians and Saracens upon each other, in the Crusades, made the people familiar with blood ; and taught Christians to butcher each other with the same alacrity with which they were seen to destroy infidels, to whom they seldom gave any quarter.

The king, at first, seemed to feel all the resentment which so sensible an injury could produce ; but equally weak in his attachment and his revenge, he was soon appeased, and granted the perpetrators a free pardon, upon their making a shew of submission and repentance. An apparent tranquillity was once more established among the contending parties ; and that resentment which they had exercised upon each other, was now converted against the Scots, who were considered as the common enemy. A war had been declared some time before with this nation, in order to recover that

that authority over them, which had been established in the former reign, and a truce was soon after concluded; but the terms of it being ill observed on both sides, the animosities were kindled afresh, and the whole military force of England was called out by the king, together with very large reinforcements, as well from the continent, as other parts of the English dominions. Edward's army amounted to a hundred thousand men; while Bruce, king of Scotland, could bring but a body of thirty thousand to oppose him. Both armies met at a place called Banockburn, in the kingdom of Scotland, within two miles of Stirling; the one confident in numbers, the other relying wholly on their advantageous position. Bruce had a hill on his right flank, and a bog on his left; with a rivulet in front, on the banks of which he had caused several deep pits to be dug, with sharp stakes driven into them, and the whole carefully concealed from the view of the enemy. The onset was made by the English; and a very furious engagement ensued between the cavalry on both sides. The fortune and intrepidity of Bruce gave the first turn to the day. He engaged in single combat with Henry de Bohun, a gentleman of the family of Hereford; and at one stroke clove his skull with his battle-

ax to the chine. So favourable a beginning was only interrupted by the night ; but the battle renewing at the dawn of the ensuing day, the English cavalry once more attempted to attack the Scottish army ; but unexpectedly found themselves entangled among those pits which Bruce had previously made to receive them. The earl of Gloucester, the king's nephew, was overthrown and slain : this served to intimidate the whole English army ; and they were soon still more alarmed by the appearance of a fresh army, as they supposed it to be, that was preparing, from a neighbouring height, to fall upon them in the rear. This was only composed of waggoners and attendants upon the Scottish camp ; who had been supplied by the king, with standards, and ordered to make as formidable an appearance as they could. The stratagem took effect ; the English, intimidated by their losses, and distracted by their fears, began to fly on all sides ; and throwing away their arms, were pursued with great slaughter, as far as Berwick.

Edward himself narrowly escaped by flight to Dunbar, where he was received by the earl of Marchie, and thence conveyed in safety by sea to Berwick. This battle was decisive in favour of the Scots. It secured the independence

dence of the crown of that kingdom ; and such was the influence of so great a defeat upon the minds of the English, that for some years after no superiority of numbers could induce them to keep the field against their formidable adversaries.

Want of success is ever attended with want of authority. The king having suffered not only a defeat from the Scots, but also having been weakened by several insurrections among the Welsh and Irish, found his greatest afflictions still remaining in the turbulence and insolence of his subjects at home. The nobility, ever factious, now took the advantage of his feeble situation to depress his power, and re-establish their own. The earl of Lancaster, and those of his party, no sooner saw the unfortunate monarch return with disgrace, than they renewed their demands, and were reinstated in their former power of governing the kingdom. It was declared, that all offices should be filled from time to time by the votes of parliament, which, as they were influenced by the great barons, these effectually took all government into their own hands. Thus, from every new calamity, the state suffered ; the barons acquired new power ; and their aims were not so much to repress the enemies

of

of their country, as to foment new animosities, and strengthen every foreign confederacy.

A confirmed opposition generally produces an opposite combination. The king finding himself thus steadily counteracted in all his aims, had no other resource but in another favourite, on whom he repose^d all confidence, and from whose connections he hoped for assistance. The name of this new favourite was Hugh Despenser, a young man of a noble English family, of some merit, and very engaging accomplishments. His father was a person of a much more estimable character than the son ; he was venerable from his years, and respected through life for his wisdom, his valour, and his integrity. But these excellent qualities were all diminished and vilified, from the moment he and his son began to share the king's favour. The turbulent barons, and Lancaster at their head, regarded him as a rival, and taught the people to despise those accomplishments that only served to eclipse their own. The king, equally weak and unjust in his attachments, instead of profiting by the wisdom of his favourites, endeavoured to strengthen himself by their power. For this purpose he married the young Spenser to his niece ; he settled

settled upon him some very large possessions in the marches of Wales ; and even dispossessed some lords unjustly of their estates, in order to accumulate them upon his favourite. This was a pretext the king's enemies had been long seeking for ; the earls of Lancastet and Hereford flew to arms ; and the lords Audley and Ammori, who had been dispossessed, joined them with all their forces. Their first measure was to require the king to dismiss or confine his favourite, the young Spenser, menacing him, in case of a refusal, with a determination to obtain by force, what should be denied to their importunities. This request was scarce made, when they began to shew their resolution to have redrefs, by pillaging and destroying the lands of young Spenser, and burning his houses. The estates of the father soon after shared the same fate ; and the insurgents having thus satiated themselves with the plunder of this most opulent family, marched up to London, to inflict with their own hands, that punishment which had been denied to their remonstrances. Finding a free entrance into the city, they so intimidated the parliament that was then sitting, that a sentence was procured of perpetual exile against the two Spensers, and a forfeiture of their fortune and estates. But an

act of this kind, extorted by violence, was not likely to bind the king any longer than necessity compelled him. Some time after, having assembled a small army to punish one of the barons, who had offered an indignity to the queen, he thought it a convenient opportunity to take revenge on all his enemies at once, and to recall the two Spencers, whose company he so ardently desired. In this manner the civil war was kindled afresh, and the country once more involved in all the horrors of slaughter and devastation.

The king had now got the start of his adversaries and hastened by forced marches towards the borders of Wales, where the enemy's chief power lay. Lancaster, however, was not slow in making head against him; having summoned together all his vassals and retainers, and being joined by the earl of Hereford. Still farther to strengthen his party, he formed an alliance with the king of Scotland, with whom he had long been privately connected. But his diligence on this occasion proved ineffectual; the king at the head of thirty thousand men pressed him so closely, that he had not time to collect his forces together; and, flying from one place to another, he was at last stopt in his way towards Scotland

land by Sir Andrew Harcla, who repulsed his forces in a skirmish, in which the earl of Hereford was slain, and Lancaster himself taken prisoner. As he had formerly shewn little mercy to Gaveston, there was very little extended to him upon this occasion. He was condemned by the court-martial; and led, mounted on a lean horse, to an eminence near Pomfret, in circumstances of the greatest indignity, where he was beheaded by a Londoner. The people, with whom he had once been a favourite, seemed to have quite forsaken him in his disgrace; they reviled him, as he was led to execution, with every kind of reproach; and even his own vassals seemed eager to remove suspicion by their being foremost to insult his distress. About eighteen more of the principal insurgents were afterwards condemned and executed in a more legal manner, while others found safety by escaping to the continent.

A rebellion, thus crushed, served only to increase the pride and rapacity of young Spenser; most of the forfeitures were seized for his use; and in his promptitude to punish the delinquents, he was found guilty of many acts of rapine and injustice. He himself laid the train for his own future misfor-

tunes, and an occasion soon offered for putting
A.D. 1324. it into effect against him. The king of France,
taking the advantage of Edward's weakness,
resolved to confiscate all his foreign domi-
nions. After a fruitless embassy from Edward,
to dissuade that monarch from his purpose, the
queen of England herself desired permission to go
over to the court of France, to endeavour to a-
vert the storm. The French king, tho' he gave
her the kindest reception, was resolved to listen
to no accommodation, unless Edward in person
should appear, and do him homage for the domi-
nions he held under him. This was reckoned a
very dangerous step; and what the king of Eng-
land could not think of complying with, nor what
his favourite Spenser was willing to permit. In
this exigence, the queen started a new expe-
dient, which seemed calculated to get rid of all
difficulties. It was, that Edward should resign
the dominion of Guienne to his son, now thir-
teen years of age; and that the young prince
should go to Paris, to pay that homage which
had been required of the father. With this
proposal all parties agreed; young Edward was
sent to Paris; and the queen, a haughty and
ambitious woman, having thus got her son in
her power, was resolved to detain him till her
own aims were complied with. Among the
number

number of these, was the expulsion of the Spencers, against whom she had conceived a violent hatred, from their great influence over the king.

In consequence of this resolution, she protracted the negotiation for some time, and being at last required by the king to return, she replied, that she would never again appear in England, till Spenser was removed from the royal presence and banished the kingdom. By this reply, she gained two very considerable advantages; she became popular in England, where Spenser was universally disliked; and she had the pleasure of enjoying the company of a young nobleman, whose name was Mortimer, upon whom she had lately placed her affections. This youth had, in some former insurrection, been condemned for high treason, but had the sentence commuted into perpetual imprisonment in the Tower. From thence, however, he had the good fortune to escape into France, and soon became distinguished among his party for his violent animosity to Spenser. The graces of his person and address, but particularly his dislike to the favourite, rendered him very acceptable to the queen; so that, from being a partizan, he became a lover, and was indulged

with all the familiarities that her criminal passion could confer. The queen's court now, therefore, became a sanctuary for all the malecontents who were banished their own country, or who chose to come over. A correspondence was secretly carried on with the discontented at home; and nothing now was aimed at, but to destroy the favourites, and dethrone the king.

A.D. 1335. To second the queen's efforts, many of the principal nobles prepared their vassals, and loudly declared against the favourite. The king's brother, the earl of Kent, was led in to engage among the rest; the earl of Norfolk was prevailed upon, to enter secretly into the conspiracy. The brother and heir to the earl of Lancaster, was from principle attached to the cause; the archbishop of Canterbury expressed his approbation of the queen's measures; and the minds of the people were inflamed by all those arts, which the designing practise upon the weak and ignorant. In this universal disposition to rebel, the queen prepared for her expedition; and, accompanied by three thousand men at arms, set out from Dort harbour, and landed safely, without opposition, on the coast of Suffolk. She no sooner appeared than there seemed a general revolt

revolt in her favour ; three prelates, the bishops of Ely, Lincoln, and Hereford, brought her all their vassals ; and Robert de Watteville, who had been sent to oppose her progress, deserted to her with all his forces.

In this exigence, the unfortunate Edward vainly attempted to collect his friends, and bring the malcontents to their duty ; he was obliged to leave the capital to the resentment of the prevailing party ; and the populace, immediately upon his desertion, flew out into those excesses which are the consequence of brutality unrestrained by fear. They seized the bishop of Exeter, as he was passing through the city, beheaded him without any form of trial, and threw his body into the Thames. They also seized upon the Tower, and agreed to shew no mercy to any who should oppose their attempts. In the mean time, the king found the spirit of disloyalty was not confined to the capital alone, but diffused over the whole kingdom. He had placed some dependence upon the garrison which was stationed in the castle of Bristol, under the command of the elder Spenser ; but they mutinied against their governor, and that unfortunate favourite was delivered up, and condemned by the tumultuous barons to the most ignominious death. He

was hanged on a gibbet in his armour, his body was cut to pieces and thrown to the dogs, and his head was sent to Winchester, where it was set on a pole, and exposed to the insults of the populace. Thus died the elder Spenser, in his ninetieth year, whose character even the malevolence of party could not tarnish. He had passed a youth of tranquillity and reputation; but his fond compliance with his son's ambition, at length involved his age in ruin, though not disgrace.

Young Spenser, the unhappy son, did not long survive the father; he was taken with some others who had followed the fortunes of the wretched king, in an obscure convent in Wales, and the merciless victors resolved to glut their revenge, in adding insult to cruelty. The queen had not patience to wait the formality of a trial; but ordered him immediately to be led forth before the insulting populace, and seemed to take a savage pleasure in feasting her eyes with his distresses. The gibbet erected for his execution was fifty feet high; his head was sent to London, where the citizens received it in brutal triumph, and fixed it on the bridge. Several other lords also shared his fate; all deserving pity indeed, had they not themselves formerly justified the present inhumanity, by setting a cruel example.

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In the mean time the king, who hoped to find refuge in Wales, was quickly discovered, and closely pursued by his triumphant enemies. Finding no hopes of succour in that part of the country, he took shipping for Ireland ; but even there his wretched fortune seemed willing to persecute him ; he was driven back by contrary winds, and delivered up to his adversaries, who expressed their satisfaction in the grossness of their treatment. He was conducted to the capital, amidst the insults and reproaches of the people, and confined in the Tower. A charge was soon after exhibited against him ; in which no other crimes but his incapacity to govern, his indolence, his love of pleasure, and his being swayed by evil counsellors, were objected against him. His deposition was quickly voted by parliament ; he was assigned a pension for his support ; his son Edward, a youth of fourteen, was fixed upon to succeed him, and the queen was appointed regent during the minority.

The deposed monarch but a short time survived his misfortunes ; he was sent from prison to prison, a wretched outcast, and the sport of his inhuman keepers. He had been at first consigned to the custody of the earl of Lancaster ; but this nobleman, shewing some marks of

A.D. 1327.

of respect and pity, he was taken out of his hands, and delivered over to lord Berkeley, Montravers, and Gournay, who were entrusted with the charge of guarding him month about. Whatever his treatment from lord Berkeley might have been, the other two seemed resolved, that he should enjoy none of the comforts of life while in their custody. They practised every kind of indignity upon him, as if their design had been to accelerate his death by the bitterness of his sufferings. Among other acts of brutal oppression, it is said that they shaved him for sport in the open fields, using water from a neighbouring ditch. The genius of the people must have been greatly debased, or they would never have permitted such indecencies to be practised on a monarch, whose greatest fault was the violence of his friendships. He is said to have borne his former indignities with patience, but all fortitude forsook him upon this occasion; he looked upon his merciless insulters with an air of fallen majesty, and bursting into tears, exclaimed, that the time might come, when he should be more decently attended. This, however, was but a vain expectation. As his persecutors saw that his death might not arrive, even under every cruelty, till a revolution had been

had been made in his favour, they resolved to rid themselves of their fears, by destroying him at once. Accordingly, his two keepers, Gourney and Montravers, came to Berkeley castle, where Edward was then confined ; and having concerted a method of putting him to death without any external signs of violence, they threw him on a bed, holding him down by a table, which they placed over him. They then ran a horn pipe up his body, through which they conveyed a red-hot iron ; and thus burnt his bowels, without disfiguring his body. By this cruel artifice, they expected to have their crime concealed ; but his horrid shrieks, which were heard at a distance from the castle, soon gave a suspicion of the murder ; and the whole was soon after divulged, by the confession of one of the accomplices. Misfortunes like his, must ever create pity ; and a punishment so disproportionate to the sufferer's guilt, must wipe away even many of those faults, of which Edward was justly culpable. He left behind him four children, two sons, and two daughters : Edward was his eldest son and successor ; John died young ; Jane was afterwards married to David Bruce, king of Scotland ; and Eleanor was married to Reginald, count of Gueldres.



C H A P. XIV.

E D W A R D III.

THE parliament, by which young Edward was raised to the throne, during the life of his father, appointed twelve persons as his privy-council, to direct the operations of government. Mortimer, the queen's paramour, who might naturally be set down as one of the members, artfully excluded himself, under a pretended shew of moderation ; but

but at the same time he secretly influenced all the measures that came under their deliberation. He caused the greatest part of the royal revenues to be settled on the queen-dowager, and he seldom took the trouble to consult the ministers of government in any public undertaking. The king himself was so besieged by the favourite's creatures, that no access could be procured to him, and the whole sovereign authority was shared between Mortimer and the queen, who took no care to conceal her criminal attachment.

A government so constituted, could not be of long continuance ; and the slightest shock was sufficient to overturn that power, which was founded neither in strength nor virtue. An irruption of the Scots gave the first blow to Mortimer's credit ; and young Edward's own abilities contributed to its ruin. The Scots, who had no connection with either party, were resolved to take advantage of the feeble state of the nation ; and, without regarding the truce that subsisted between the two kingdoms, attempted to surprise the castle of Norham. This commencement of hostilities, they soon after seconded by a formidable invasion on the northern counties, with an army of twenty thousand men. Edward, even at this early age, discovered that martial disposition,

for

A.D. 1327. for which he was afterwards so famous. He resolved to intercept them in their retreat ; and began his march in the middle of July, at the head of an army of threescore thousand men ; but after undergoing incredible fatigues, in pursuing them through woods and morasses, he was unable to perceive any signs of an enemy, except from the ravages they had made, and the smoaking ruins of villages, which they had set on fire. In this disappointment, he had no other resource, but to offer a reward to any who should discover the place where the Scots were posted. This the enemy understanding, sent him word that they were ready to meet him and give him battle. However, they had taken so advantageous a situation, on the opposite banks of the river Ware, that the king found it impracticable to attack them ; and no threats could bring them to a battle upon equal terms.

It was in this situation, that the first breach was discovered between the king and Mortimer, the queen's favourite. The young monarch, all ardour to engage, resolved that night, at all hazards, not to allow the ravagers to escape with impunity ; but Mortimer opposed his influence to the valour of the king, and prevented an engagement, which

which might be attended with the most destructive consequences to his authority, whether he won, or lost the day. Shortly after, the Scots, under the command of Douglas, made an irruption into the English camp by night, and arrived at the very tent in which the king was sleeping. But the young monarch happening to wake in the critical moment, made a valiant defence against the enemy; his chamberlain and chaplain died fighting by his side; and he thus had time given him to escape in the dark. The Scots being frustrated in their design upon the king, were contented to decamp for their own country, leaving their tents standing, without any person behind them, except six English prisoners, whose legs they had broken, to prevent their carrying intelligence to their countrymen. The escape of the Scots was as disagreeable a circumstance to the English army, as the valour of the young king was applauded and admired. The failure on one part was entirely ascribed to the queen's favourite; and the success on the other, to the king's own intrepidity. The people began to wish for a removal of that authority, which stood between them and the monarch; and spared no pains to aggravate the faults of their governors, or to extol the rising merit of their young sovereign.

Mortimer now saw himself exalted to a very precarious situation; and was resolved, on any terms, to procure a peace with Scotland, in order to fix his power more firmly at home. A treaty was accordingly concluded between the two nations, in which the English renounced all title to sovereignty over the sister kingdom; and the Scots, in return, agreed to pay thirty thousand marks as a compensation. The next step that Mortimer thought necessary for his security, was to seize the earl of Kent, brother to the late king, a harmless and well meaning person, who, under a persuasion that his brother was still alive, and concealed in some secret prison, entered into a design of restoring him to liberty, and reinstating him in his former power. Him therefore Mortimer resolved to destroy; and summoning him before parliament, had him accused, condemned, and executed, even before the young king had time to interpose in his favour. In proportion as Mortimer thus got rid of his enemies, he was careful to enrich himself with their spoils. The estate of the unfortunate earl was seized upon for the use of the favourite's youngest son: the immense fortunes of the Spencers were in like manner converted to his use. Thus his power became invidious, and his corrupt morals made it still more formidable.

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It was in this posture of affairs, that Edward resolved to shake off an authority that was odious to the nation, and particularly restrictive upon him. But such was the power of the favourite, that it required as much precaution to overturn the usurper, as to establish the throne. The queen and Mortimer had for some time chosen the castle of Nottingham for the place of their residence ; it was strictly guarded, the gates locked every evening, and the keys carried to the queen. It was therefore agreed between the king, and some of his barons, who secretly entered into his designs, to seize upon them in this fortress ; and for that purpose, sir William Eland, the governor, was induced to admit them by a secret subterraneous passage, which had been formerly contrived for an outlet, but was now hidden with rubbish, and known only to one or two. It was by this, therefore, the noblemen in the king's interest entered the castle in the night ; and Mortimer, without having it in his power to make any resistance, was seized in an apartment adjoining that of the queen's. It was in vain that she endeavoured to protect him ; in vain she entreated them to spare her “gentle Mortimer ;” the barons, deaf to her entreaties, denied her that pity, which she had so often refused to

others. Her paramour was condemned by the parliament, which was then sitting, without being permitted to make his defence, or even examining a witness against him. He was hanged on a gibbet at a place called Elmes, about a mile from London, where his body was left hanging for two days after. A similar sentence passed against some of his adherents, particularly Gournay, and Montravers, the murderers of the late king; but these had time to elude punishment, by escaping to the continent. The queen, who was certainly the most culpable, was shielded by the dignity of her situation; she was only discarded from all share of power, and confined for life, to the castle of Risings, with a pension of three thousand pounds a year. From this confinement, she was never after set free; and though the king annually paid her a visit of decent ceremony, yet she found herself abandoned to universal contempt and detestation; and continued, for above twenty-five years after, a miserable monument of blasted ambition.

Edward being thus freed from the control of usurped authority, resolved to become popular, by an expedient which seldom failed to gain the affections of the English. He knew that a conquering monarch was the fittest
to

to please a warlike people. The weakness of the Scottish government, which was at that time under a minority, gave him a favourable opportunity of renewing hostilities ; and the turbulent spirit of the nobles of that country contributed still more to promote his aims. A new pretender also started up to that throne, namely, Edward Baliol, whose father John had been crowned king of Scotland, and Edward resolved to assist him in his pretensions. He therefore gave him permission to levy what forces he was able in England ; and with not above three thousand adventurers, thus fortuitously united, Baliol gained a considerable victory over his countrymen, in which twelve thousand of their men were slain. This victory, which was followed by some others, so intimidated the Scots, that their armies dispersed, and the kingdom seemed as if subdued by a handful of men. Baliol, by one of those unexpected turns of fortune, common enough in barbarous times, was crowned king at Scone ; and every nobleman, who was most exposed to danger, submitted to his authority. But he did not long enjoy his superiority ; by another turn equally sudden, he was attacked and defeated by sir Archibald Douglas, and obliged to take re-

fuge in England once more, in a miserable condition.

An attempt thus unsuccessfully made by Baliol, only served to inflame the ardour of Edward, who very joyfully accepted of that offer of homage and superiority, which it was Baliol's present interest to make. He therefore prepared, with all his force, to reinstate the deposed king of Scotland, in a government which would ever after be subordinate to his own. He accordingly prevailed upon his parliament to give him a supply, which they reluctantly did ; and, with a well-disciplined army, he laid siege to Berwick, which capitulated after a vigorous defence. It was in attempting to relieve this city, that a general engagement ensued between the Scots and the English. It was fought at Hallidown-hill, a little north of Berwick, with great obstinacy on both sides ; but the fortune of Edward prevailed. Douglas, the Scottish general, was slain, and soon after the whole army put to the route. This victory was, in a great measure, obtained by the expertness of the English archers, who now began to be famous over Europe for their peculiar skill. All the Scottish nobles of great distinction were either slain, or taken prisoners ; near thirty

thousand of their men fell in the action, while the loss of the English only amounted to about fifteen men ; an inequality almost incredible. This important victory decided the fate of Scotland; Baliol, with very little trouble, made himself master of the country ; and Edward returned in triumph to England, having previously secured many of the principal towns of Scotland, which were declared to be annexed to the English monarchy. These victories, however, were rather splendid than serviceable ; the Scots seemed about this time to have conceived an unsurmountable aversion to the English government ; and no sooner were Edward's forces withdrawn, than they revolted against Baliol, and well nigh expelled him the kingdom. Edward's appearance a second time served to bring them to subjection ; but they quickly renewed their animosities upon his retiring. It was in vain, therefore, that he employed all the arts of persuasion, and all the terrors of war, to induce them to submission ; they persevered in their reluctance to obey ; and they were daily kept in hopes, by promises of succour from France.

This kingdom, which had for a long time discontinued its animosities against England, began to be an object of Edward's jealousy

A.D. 1333.
July 9.

lousy and ambition. A new scene began to be opened in France, which operated for more than a century, in subjecting that country to all the miseries of war, till Europe at last began to doubt, whether it was annexed to England by right of arms, or of succession. France, at that period, was neither the extensive, nor the powerful kingdom we see it at this day. Many great provinces have been added to it since that period, particularly Dauphiny, Provence, and Franche Compte ; and the government was still more feeble, by those neighbouring princes, who were pretended subjects to the king, but, in reality, formidable rivals of his power. At the time we are speaking of, that kingdom was particularly unfortunate ; and the king shared in the general calamity. The three sons of Philip the Fair, in full parliament, accused their wives of adultery ; and, in consequence of this accusation, they were condemned and imprisoned for life. Lewis Hutin, the successor to the crown of France, caused his wife to be strangled, and her lovers to be flead alive. After his death, as he left only a daughter, his next brother, Philip the Tall, assumed the crown, in prejudice of the daughter ; and vindicated his title by the Salic law, which laid it down, that no female

female should succeed to the crown. This law, however, was not universally acknowledged, nor sufficiently confirmed by precedents, to procure an easy submission. They had hitherto enquired but slightly in France, whether a female could succeed to the kingdom; and as laws are only made to regulate what may happen by what has happened already, there was no facts upon which to ground the opinions on either side of the question. There were, in reality, precedents to countenance both claims, and thus to keep mankind in suspense. The parliament in France had often adjudged the succession to women, as Artois was formerly given to a female, in prejudice of the male heir. The succession of Champagne had been, on some occasion, given to the daughters; while, on others, they were judged unqualified to succeed. We thus see that right changed with power; and justice, in such a case, was unknown, or disregarded. In the present instance, the younger brother of the late king, Charles the Fair, jealous of his elder brother's fortune, opposed his pretensions, and asserted, that the late king's daughter was rightful heir to his crown. The cause, thus warmly contested between the two brothers, was at last carried before the parliament

ment of France ; and they decided, upon the Salic law, in favour of Philip the Elder. This monarch enjoyed the crown but a short time ; and dying, left only daughters to succeed him. Charles therefore, without a male opponent, seized the crown, and enjoyed it for some time ; but he also dying, left his wife pregnant. As there was now no apparent heir, the regency was contested by two persons, who laid their claims upon this occasion. Edward the Third urged his pretensions, as being by his mother Isabella, who was daughter to Philip the Fair, and sister to the three last kings of France, rightful heir to the crown. Philip Valois, on the other hand, put himself in actual possession of the government, as being next heir by the male succession. He was therefore constituted regent of France ; and the queen-dowager being unfortunately, some time after, brought to bed of a daughter, he was unanimously elected king. He was crowned amidst the universal congratulations of his subjects ; received the appellation of Philip the Fortunate ; and to this he added those qualities which might merit good fortune, namely, justice and virtue. Among other instances of his felicity, he might reckon that of the homage paid him by Edward, his rival, which he

he came to offer at Amiens. However, as strength generally inspires ambition, this homage was soon followed by a war ; and Edward disputed that crown, of which he had just before declared himself a vassal.

A brewer of Ghent was one of those who gave the greatest assistance to Edward in this war, and determined him to assume the title of king of France. This citizen's name was James Ardevelt, a man grown too powerful for a subject ; and one of those who, according to Machiavel, kings ought to flatter, or destroy. This citizen had, for some time, governed his countrymen with a more absolute sway than had ever been assumed by any of their lawful sovereigns. He placed and displaced magistrates at his pleasure. He was accompanied by a guard, who, on the least signal from him, instantly assassinated any man who had the misfortune to fall under his displeasure. With the assistance of this man, therefore, Edward resolved to undertake the conquest of France. He first, however, in a formal manner, consulted his parliament on the propriety of the undertaking, obtained their approbation, received a proper supply of wool, which he intended to barter with the Flemings ; and being attended with a body of English forces,

and

and several of his nobility, he sailed over into Flanders, big with his intended conquests.

Edward's first step was to assert this claim to the French crown ; to assume the title of king of the country, and brand Philip, his rival, A. D. 1339. with the title of usurper. Philip, on the other hand, made vigorous preparations to oppose him ; he even challenged the invader to try their fortune in single combat, upon equal terms, in some appointed plain. Edward accepted the challenge ; for in every action this prince affected the hero ; but some obstacles intervening, the war was prosecuted in the usual manner, both sides taking every advantage when it happened to offer.

The first great advantage gained by the English was in a naval engagement on the coast of Flanders, in which the French lost two hundred and thirty ships, and had thirty thousand of their seamen, and two of their admirals, slain. None of Philip's courtiers, it is said, dared to inform him of the event, till his jester gave him a hint, by which he discovered the loss he had sustained. This victory, together with some successful operations that soon after followed, brought on a truce, which neither side seemed willing to break, till the ambition of Edward was once more excited by

by the invitation of the count de Mountfort, who had possessed himself of the province of Brittany, and applied to Edward to second his claims. An offer of this kind entirely coincided with Edward's most sanguine desires. He immediately saw the advantages arising from such a proposal. He was happy in the promised assistance of Mountfort, an active and valiant prince, closely united to him by interest, and thus opening to him an entrance into the heart of France. On the other hand, he could have no hopes from the side of Flanders, as he was obstructed by those numerous fortifications which had been raised on that frontier. These flattering prospects, however, were for a while damped by the imprisonment of Mountfort, whose aims being discovered, he found himself besieged in the city of Nantz, and taken. But Jane of Flanders, his wife, soon made up for the loss of her husband. This lady, who was one of the most extraordinary women of the age, courageously undertook to support the falling fortunes of her family. She assembled the inhabitants of Rennes, where she then resided; and carrying her infant son in her arms, deplored her misfortunes, and attempted to inspire the citizens with an affection for her cause. The inhabitants of Nantz instantly espoused

her

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her interests, and all the other fortresses of Brittany embraced the same resolution ; the king of England was apprised of her efforts in his favour, and entreated to send her succours with all possible expedition to the town of Hennebone, in which place she resolved to sustain the attacks of the enemy. She was not deceived in her opinion of the enemies vigilance and activity. Charles de Blois, Philip's general, anxious to make himself master of so important a fortress as Hennebone, and still more to take the countess a prisoner, sat down before the place with a large army, and conducted the siege with indefatigable industry. The defence was no less vigorous ; several sallies were made by the garrison, in which the countess herself was still the most active, and led on to the assault. Observing one day that their whole army had quitted the camp to join in a general storm, she sallied out by a postern at the head of three hundred horse, set fire to the enemies tents and baggage, put their sutlers and servants to the sword, and occasioned such an alarm, that the French desisted from the assault, in order to cut off her communication with the town. Thus intercepted, she retired to Auray, where she continued five or six days ; then returning at the head of five hundred horse, she fought her way through

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one quarter of the French camp, and returned to her faithful citizens in triumph. But mere unsupported valour could not repel all the encroachments of an active and superior enemy. The besiegers had at length made several breaches in the walls ; and it was apprehended that a general assault, which was hourly expected, would be fatal. A capitulation was therefore proposed, and a conference was already begun, when the countess, who had mounted on a high tower, and was looking towards the sea with great impatience, descried some ships at a distance. She immediately exclaimed that succours were arrived, and forbid any farther capitulation. She was not disappointed in her wishes ; the fleet she discerned carried a body of English gentlemen, with six thousand archers, whom Edward had prepared for the relief of Hennebone, but who had been long detained by contrary winds. They entered the harbour, under the conduct of sir Walter Manny, one of the most valiant commanders of his time. This relief served to keep up the declining spirits of the Bretons, until the time appointed by the late truce with Edward was expired, on which he was at liberty to renew the war in greater form.

A.D. 1342. He accordingly soon after landed at Morbian, near Vannes, with an army of twelve thousand men; and being master of the field where no enemy dared to appear against him, he endeavoured to give lustre to his arms, by besieging some of the most capital of the enemies fortifications. The vigour of his operations led on to another truce, and this was soon after followed by a fresh infraction. The truth is, neither side observed a truce longer than it coincided with their interests; and both had always sufficient art to throw the blame of perfidy from themselves. The earl of Derby was sent by Edward to defend the province of Guienne, with instructions also to take every possible advantage that circumstances might offer. At first therefore his successes were rapid and brilliant; but as soon as the French king had time to prepare, he met with a very unexpected resistance; so that the English general was compelled to stand upon the defensive. One fortress after another was surrendered to the French; and nothing appeared but a total extinction of the power of England upon the continent. In this situation, Edward resolved to bring relief in person to his distressed subjects and allies; and accordingly embarked A.D. 1346. at Southampton, on board a fleet of near a thousand

thousand sail, of all dimensions. He carried with him, besides all the chief nobility of England, his eldest son, the prince of Wales (afterwards f暑rnamed the Black Prince) a youth of about fifteen years old, and already remarkable both for understanding and valour above his age. His army consisted of four thousand men at arms, ten thousand archers, ten thousand Welsh infantry, and six thousand Irish, all which he landed safely at La Hogue, a port in Normandy, which country he determined to make the seat of war.

The intelligence of Edward's landing, and the devastation caused by his troops, who dispersed themselves over the whole face of the country, soon spread universal consternation through the French court. The rich city of Caen was taken and plundered by the English without mercy ; the villages and towns, even up to Paris, shared the same fate ; and the French had no other resource but by breaking down their bridges, to attempt putting a stop to the invader's career. In the mean time, Philip was not idle in making preparations to repress the enemy. He had stationed one of his generals, Godemar de Faye, with an army on the opposite side of the river Somme, over which Edward was to pass ; while he himself, at the

head of a hundred thousand fighting men, advanced to give the English battle. Edward thus, in the midst of his victories, unexpectedly exposed to the danger of being enclosed and starving in an enemy's country, published a reward to any that should bring him intelligence of a passage over the river Somme. This was discovered by a peasant of the country; and Edward had just time to get his whole army over the river, when Philip appeared in his rear.

As both armies had for some time been in sight of each other, nothing was so eagerly expected on each side as a battle; and although the forces were extremely disproportioned, the English amounting only to thirty thousand, the French to a hundred and twenty thousand; yet Edward resolved to indulge the impetuosity of his troops, and put all to the hazard of a battle. He accordingly chose his ground, with advantage, near the village of Crecy; and there determined to await with tranquillity the shock of the enemy. He drew up his men on a gentle ascent, and divided them into three lines. The first was commanded by the young prince of Wales; the second was conducted by the earls of Northampton and Arundel; and the third, which was kept as a body of reserve,

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was headed by the king in person. As his small army was in danger of being surrounded, he threw up trenches on his flank; and placed all his baggage in a wood behind him, which he also secured by an entrenchment. Having thus made the proper dispositions, he and the prince of Wales received the sacrament with great devotion; and all his behaviour denoted the calm intrepidity of a man resolved on conquest, or death. He rode from rank to rank with a serene countenance; bade his soldiers remember the honour of their country; and by his eloquence animated the whole army to a degree of enthusiastic expectation. It is said also by some, that he first made use of artillery upon this occasion; and placed in his front some pieces, which contributed not a little to throw the enemy into disorder.

On the other side, Philip, impelled by resentment, and confident of his numbers, was more solicitous in bringing the enemy to an engagement, than prudent in taking measures for the success of it. He was advised by some of his generals to defer the combat till the ensuing day, when his army would have recovered from their fatigue, and might be disposed into better order than their present hurry permitted them to observe. But it was now too late; the

impatience of his troops was too great to be restrained ; they pressed one upon the other, and no orders could curb their blind impetuosity. They were led on, however, in three bodies to oppose those of the English. The first line, consisting of fifteen thousand Genoese cross-bow-men, were commanded by Anthony Doria ; the second body was led by the count Alençon, brother to the king ; and the king himself was at the head of the third.

About three in the afternoon, the famous battle of Crecy began, by the French king's ordering the Genoese archers to charge ; but they were so fatigued with their march, that they cried out for a little rest before they should engage. The count Alençon, being informed of their petition, rode up and reviled them as cowards, commanding them to begin the onset without delay. Their reluctance to begin was still more increased by a heavy shower which fell that instant and relaxed their bow-strings ; so that the discharge they made, produced but very little effect. On the other hand, the English archers, who had kept their bows in cases, and were favoured by a sudden gleam of sunshine, that rather dazzled the enemy, let fly their arrows so thick, and with such good aim, that nothing was to be seen among the

Genoese

Genoese but hurry, terror, and dismay. The young prince of Wales had presence of mind to take advantage of their confusion, and to lead on his line to the charge. The French cavalry, however, commanded by count Alençon, wheeling round sustained the combat, and began to hem the English round. The earls of Arundel and Northampton, now came in to assist the prince, who appeared foremost in the very shock ; and wherever he appeared, turning the fortune of the day. The thickest of the battle was now gathered round him, and the valour of a boy filled even veterans with astonishment ; but their surprize at his courage could not give way to their fears for his safety. Being apprehensive that some mischance might happen to him in the end, an officer was dispatched to the king, desiring that succours might be sent to the prince's relief. Edward, who had all this time, with great tranquillity, viewed the engagement, from a wind-mill, demanded with seeming deliberation if his son were dead ; but being answered that he still lived, and was giving astonishing instances of his valour ; “ then tell my generals, “ cried the king, that he shall have no assistance from me ; the honour of this day shall “ be his, let him shew himself worthy the pro-

“ session of arms, and let him be indebted to his own merit alone for victory.” This speech, being reported to the prince and his attendants, inspired them with new courage; they made a fresh attack upon the French cavalry, and count Alençon, their bravest commander, was slain. This was the beginning of their total overthrow: the French being now without a competent leader, were thrown into confusion; the Welch infantry rushed into the midst of the conflict, and dispatched those with their long knives who had survived the fury of the former onset. It was in vain that the king of France himself, seemed almost singly to maintain the combat; he endeavoured to animate his few followers, both by his voice and example, but the victory was too decisive to be resisted; while he was yet endeavouring to face the enemy, John de Hainault seized the reins of his horse, and turning him round, carried him off the field of battle. In this engagement, thirty thousand of the French were killed upon the field; and, among this number, were John king of Bohemia, James king of Majorca, Ralph duke of Lorrain, nine counts, four and twenty bannerets, twelve hundred knights, fifteen hundred gentlemen, and four thousand men at arms. There is some-

thing remarkable in the fate of the Bohemian monarch; who, though blind, was yet willing to share in the engagement. This unfortunate prince, enquiring the fate of the day, was told that all was lost, and his son Charles obliged to retire desperately wounded; and that the prince of Wales bore down every thing before him. Having received this information, blind as he was, he commanded his knights to lead him into the hottest part of the battle against the young warrior; accordingly, four of them rushed with him into the thickest part of the enemy, where they were all quickly slain.

The whole French army took to flight, and were put to the sword by the pursuers without mercy, till night stopped the carnage. The king, on his return to the camp, flew into the arms of the prince of Wales, and exclaimed, "My valiant son, continue as you have begun; " you have acquitted yourself nobly, and are "worthy of the kingdom that will be your inheritance." The next morning was foggy, and a party of the militia of Rouen coming to join the French army, were routed by the English at the first onset; many more also were decoyed by some French standards, which the victors placed upon the mountains, and to

which the fugitives resorted, where they were cut in pieces without mercy. Never was a victory more seasonable, or less bloody to the English than this. Notwithstanding the great slaughter of the enemy, the conquerors lost but one esquire, three knights, and a few of inferior rank. The crest of the king of Bohemia was three ostrich feathers, with this motto, Ich Dien, which signifies, in the German language, I serve. This was thought to be a proper prize to perpetuate the victory; and it was accordingly added to the arms of the prince of Wales, and it has been adopted by all his successors.

But this victory was attended with still more substantial advantages; for Edward, as moderate in conquest as prudent in his measures to obtain it, resolved to secure an easy entrance into France for the future. With this view he laid siege to Calais, that was then defended by John de Vienne, an experienced commander, and supplied with every thing necessary for defence. The king, however, knowing the difficulty of taking so strong a town by force, resolved to reduce it by famine. He chose a secure station for his camp; drew entrenchments round the city, and made proper provisions for his soldiers to endure a winter campaign.

paign. These operations, though slow, were at length successful. It was in vain, that the governor made a noble defence, that he excluded all the useless mouths from the city, which Edward generously permitted to pass unmolested through his camp. It was at length taken, after a twelvemonth's siege, the defendants having been reduced to the last extremity by famine and fatigue. The obstinate resistance, made by the townsmen, was not a little displeasing to Edward; and he had often declared, that when put in possession of the place, he would take signal revenge for the numbers of men he had lost during the siege. It was with great difficulty, therefore, that he was persuaded to accept of their submission; and to spare their lives, upon condition, that six of the most considerable citizens should be sent him, to be disposed of as he should think proper; but on these he was resolved to wreak his resentment, and he gave orders that they should be led into his camp, bare-headed, and bare-footed, with ropes about their necks, in the manner of criminals just preparing for instant execution. When the news of this fierce resolution was brought into the city, it spread new consternation among the inhabitants. Who should be the men, that were thus to be offered

ed up as victims to procure the safety of all the rest, and by their deaths appease the victor's resentment, was a fresh subject of dreadful enquiry. In this terrible suspense, one of the principal inhabitants, whose name was Eustace de St. Pierre, walked forward, and offered himself as willing to undergo any tortures that could procure his fellow-citizens safety. Five more soon followed his noble example; and these marching out like criminals laid the keys of their city at Edward's feet; but no submissions seemed sufficient to appease his resentment; and they would in all probability have suffered death, had not the generosity of their conduct affected the queen, who interceded in their behalf, and with some difficulty obtained their pardon.

A.D. 1347. Edward having thus opened himself a passage into France, by which he might at any time pour in his forces, and withdraw them with security, revolved on every method that could add strength or stability to his new acquisition. He ordered all the French inhabitants to leave the town, and peopled it with his own subjects from England. He also made it the staple, or principal market for wool, leather, tin, and lead; which were the principal English commodities for which there was any considerable

able demand upon the continent. All the English were obliged to bring their goods thither; and foreign merchants came to the same place to purchase them. By these means, the city became populous, rich, and flourishing; and although it had like to have been taken some time after by treachery, it continued for above two centuries after in the possession of the English, and braved all the military power of France.

The treachery, which had like to have restored it to the French, arose from the perfidy of Aymer de Pavie, an Italian, who had been appointed governor of the place. He agreed to deliver it up to the enemy, when his perfidy was discovered by Edward, who obliged him to carry on the treaty, and to persuade the enemy that he was still in their interests. Accordingly a day was appointed for the admission of the French troops into the city; while the king, with a strong body of forces, took care to prepare for their reception. All those who entered the city were immediately cut to pieces; and the garrison, with Edward, and Sir Walter Manny at their head, rushing out in pursuit of the rest, a fierce and bloody engagement ensued, in which the king overthrew and took

Eustace

Enstace de Ribaumont, a man of remarkable strength and valour, with his own hand.

In this manner, the war between the English and French was carried on with mutual animosity; a war which at once thinned the inhabitants of the invaded country, while it drained that of the invaders. But a destruction still more terrible than that of war contributed, at this time, to desolate the wretched provinces of Europe. A pestilence, more dreadful than any mentioned in the annals of history, which had already almost dispeopled Asia and Africa, came to settle upon the western world with increased malignity. It is said to have taken its origin in the great kingdom of Cathay, where it rose from the earth with the most horrid and sulphureous stench, destroying all the inhabitants, and even marking plants and minerals with its malignity. The fourth part of the people were cut off; and it particularly raged with such violence in London, that in one year's space, there were buried in the Charter House church-yard, above fifty thousand persons. It was in the midst of this terrible infliction from nature, that the ambition of Edward and Philip was exerted for new conquests, and was adding to the calamities of mankind. Yet still these ra-

D. 1349.

vages

vages were silently repairing by commerce and industry; these arts, which were then despised by princes, were laying the seeds of future opulence, and increased population. The arts of peace had for some time been revived in Italy, and were gradually travelling westward; the refinements and the pleasures of sense, every day began to improve, although intellectual refinements were as yet totally unknown. Sensual enjoyments must ever be carried to some height, before mankind can find leisure or taste for entertainments of a more exquisite nature.

Nor was England free from internal wars during this dreary period. While Edward was reaping victories upon the continent, the Scots, ever willing to embrace a favourable opportunity of rapine and revenge, invaded the frontiers with a numerous army, headed by David Bruce their king. This unexpected invasion, at such a juncture, alarmed the English, but was not capable of intimidating them. Lionel, Edward's son, who was left guardian of England during his father's absence, was yet too young to take upon him the command of an army; but the victories on the continent, seemed to inspire even women with valour: Philippa, Edward's queen, took upon her the conduct

A.D. 1346. conduct of the field, and prepared to repulse the enemy in person. Accordingly, having made lord Percy general under her, she met the Scots at a place called Nevill's Cross, near Durham, and offered them battle. The Scottish king was no less impatient to engage ; he imagined that he might obtain an easy victory against undisciplined troops, and headed by a woman. But he was miserably deceived. His army was quickly routed and driven from the field. Fifteen thousand of his men were cut to pieces ; and he himself, with many of his nobles and knights, were taken prisoners, and carried in triumph to London.

This victory diffused an universal degree of joy through the nation ; a captive king was an object that flattered their pride, and they soon had new reasons for exultation. Philip, who was farnamed the Fortunate, upon coming to the crown of France, ended his life under the accumulation of every misfortune that could render a king unhappy. John his son succeeded him on the throne, which was but ill supported by Philip, and yet still worse by him. This weak, yet virtuous prince, upon coming to the crown, found himself at the head of an exhausted nation, and a divided and factious nobility. France at that time pretty much

much resembled England under the reign of a prince of the same name some ages before. They had parliaments of barons despotic over their own hereditary possessions; and they obliged John their king, to sign a charter very much resembling the Magna Charta, which had formerly been signed by his name-sake of England. The warlike resources, therefore, of France and England, were at this time very unequal. John was at the head of a nobility, that acknowledged no subordination among each other; they led their dependent slaves to battle, and obeyed their superiors only as it suited their inclination. Their king might more justly be said to command a number of small armies under distinct leaders, than one vast machine, operating with uniformity and united efforts. The French barons paid their own soldiers, punished their transgressions, and rewarded their fidelity. But the forces of England were under a very different establishment; the main body of the English army was composed of soldiers indiscriminately levied throughout the nation, paid by the king, and regarding him alone as the source of preferment or disgrace. Instead of personal attendance, the nobility contributed supplies in money; and there was only such a number of nobles in the

army

army as might keep the spirit of honour alive without injuring military subordination.

It was in this state of things, that a short truce which had been concluded between Edward and Philip was dissolved by the death of the latter ; and Edward, well pleased with the factions that then prevailed in France, was resolved to seize the opportunity of increasing its distresses. Accordingly the Black Prince was sent into France with his army, on board a fleet of a hundred sail ; and, landing in Gascony, carried his devastations into the heart of the country. On the other hand, Edward himself made an irruption on the side of Calais, at the head of a numerous army, and ravaged all the open country. In the mean time John, who was as yet unprepared to oppose the progress of the enemy, continued a quiet spectator of their insults ; nor was it till the succeeding summer's campaign, that he re-

A.D. 1355. solved to attack the Black Prince, whose army was by this time reduced to a body of about twelve thousand men. With such a trifling complement of forces had this young warrior ventured to penetrate into the heart of France, with a design of joining his forces to those of the duke of Lancaster. But he soon found that his scheme was impracticable,

practicable; the country before him was too well guarded to prevent his advancing farther; and all the bridges behind were broken down, which effectually barred a retreat. In this embarrassing situation, his perplexity was increased, by being informed, that the king of France was actually marching at the head of sixty thousand men to intercept him. He at first thought of retreating; but soon finding it impossible, he determined calmly to await the approach of the enemy; and, notwithstanding the disparity of forces, to commit all to the hazard of a battle.

It was at a place called Maupertuis, near Poictiers, that both armies came in sight of each other. The French king might very easily have starved the English into any terms he thought proper to impose: but such was the impatient valour of the French nobility, and such their certainty of success, that it might have been equally fatal to attempt repressing their ardour to engage. In the mean time, while both armies were drawn out, and expecting the signal to begin, they were stopped by the appearance of the cardinal of Perigord, who attempted to be a mediator between them. However, John, who made himself sure of victory, would listen to no other terms than

than the restitution of Calais; with which the Black Prince refusing to comply, the onset was deferred till the next morning, for which both sides waited in anxious suspense.

It was during this interval, that the young prince shewed himself worthy of conquest; he strengthened his post by new intrenchments; he placed three hundred men in ambush, with as many archers, who were commanded to attack the enemy in flank, during the heat of the engagement. Having taken these precautions, and the morning beginning to appear, he ranged his army in three divisions; the van commanded by the earl of Warwick; the rear by the earls of Salisbury and Suffolk; and the main body by himself. In like manner the king of France arranged his forces in three divisions; the first commanded by the duke of Orleans; the second by the Dauphin, attended by his younger brothers; while he himself led up the main body, seconded by his youngest and favourite son, then about fourteen years of age. As the English were to be attacked only by marching up a long narrow lane, the French suffered greatly from their archers, who were posted on each side, behind the hedges. Nor were they in a better situation upon emerging from this danger,
being

being met by the Black Prince himself, at the head of a chosen body of troops, who made a furious onset upon their forces, already in great disorder. A dreadful overthrow ensued ; those who were as yet in the lane recoiled upon their own forces : while the English troops, who had been placed in ambush, took that opportunity to increase the confusion, and confirm the victory. The dauphin, and the duke of Orleans, were among the first that fled. The king of France himself made the utmost efforts to retrieve by his valour, what his rashness had forfeited ; but his single courage was unable to stop that consternation, which had now become general through his army ; and his cavalry soon flying, he found himself totally exposed to the enemy's fury. He saw his nobles falling round him, valiantly fighting in his defence, and his youngest son wounded by his side. At length, spent with fatigue, and despairing of success, he thought of yielding himself a prisoner ; and frequently cried out, that he was ready to deliver himself to his cousin, the prince of Wales. The honour of taking him, however, was reserved for a much more ignoble hand ; he was seized by Dennis de Morbec, a knight of Arras, who had been obliged to fly his country for murder.

This success was, in a great measure, owing to the valour and conduct of the Black Prince ; but his moderation in victory was a nobler triumph than had ever graced any former conqueror. He came forth to meet the captive monarch with an air of pitying modesty ; he remonstrated with him in the most humble manner, when he began to complain of his misfortunes, that he still had the comfort left of reflecting, that, though unsuccessful, he had done all that deserved to ensure conquest ; he promised, that a submissive deference to his dignity should never be wanting to soften his captivity ; and at table he actually refused to sit down, but stood among the number of his prisoner's attendants, declaring, that it did not become him, as a subject, to sit down in the presence of a king.

A.D. 1357. In April following, the prince conducted his royal prisoner through London, attended by an infinite concourse of people of all ranks and stations. His modesty upon this occasion was not less than before ; the king of France was clad in royal apparel, and mounted on a white steed, distinguished by its size and beauty ; while the prince himself rode by his side upon a mean little horse, and in very plain attire.

Two kings prisoners in the same court, and at the same time, were considered as glorious achievements ; but all that England gained by them was only glory. Whatever was won in France, with all the dangers of war, and the expence of preparation, was successively, and in a manner silently, lost, without the mortification of a defeat. It may be easily supposed, that the treaties which were made with the captive kings, were highly advantageous to the conquerors ; but these treaties were no longer observed than while the English had it in their power to enforce obedience. It is true that John held to his engagements as far as he was able ; but by being a prisoner he lost his authority ; and his misfortunes had rendered him contemptible at home. The dauphin, and the states of France, rejected the treaties he had been induced to sign ; and prepared in good earnest, to repel the meditated invasions of the conqueror. All the consider-
A.D. 1358.

able towns were put into a posture of defence ; and every thing valuable in the kingdom was secured in fortified places. It was in vain therefore, that Edward tried to allure the dauphin to hazard a battle, by sending him a defiance ; it was impossible to make that cautious prince change the plan of his operations ;

it was in vain that Edward alledged the obligation of the treaties which had been signed at London, and plundered the country round to provoke an engagement. He, at length, therefore thought fit to listen to equitable terms of peace, which was at last concluded, upon condition that king John should be restored to liberty, upon paying a ransom of about a million and a half of our money. It was stipulated, that Edward should for ever renounce all claim to the kingdom of France; and should only remain possessed of the territories of Poictou, Xaintonge, l'Agenois, Perigord, the Limousin, Quercy, Rouvergne, l'Angoumois, and other districts in that quarter, together with Calais, Guisnes, Montreuil, and the county of Ponthieu, on the other side of France, some other stipulations were made in favour of the allies of England, and forty hostages were sent to England, as a security for the execution of all these conditions.

Upon John's return to his dominions, he found himself very ill able to ratify those terms of peace that had been just concluded. He was without finances, at the head of an exhausted state; his soldiers without discipline, and his peasants without subordination. These had risen in great numbers; and one of the chiefs

chiefs of their banditti assumed the title of the Friend of God, and the Terror of Man. A citizen of Sens, named John Gouge, also got himself, by means of his robberies, to be acknowledged king ; and he soon caused as many calamities by his devastations, as the real king had brought on by his misfortunes. Such was the state of that wretched kingdom, upon the return of its captive monarch ; and yet, such was his absurdity, that he immediately prepared for a crusade into the Holy Land, before he was well replaced on the throne. Had his exhausted subjects been able to equip him for this chimerical project, it is probable he would have gone through with it ; but their miseries were such, that they were even too poor to pay his ransom. This was a breach of treaty that John would not submit to ; and he was heard to express himself in a very noble manner upon the occasion,

“ Though, says he, good faith should be banished from the rest of the earth, yet she ought still to retain her habitation in the breast of kings.” In consequence of this declaration, he actually returned to England once more, and yielded himself a prisoner, since he could not be honourably free. It is said by some, that his passion for the countess of

Salisbury was the real cause of this journey ; but we want at this time the foundations for such an injurious report. He was lodged in the Savoy, the palace where he had resided during his captivity ; and soon after he closed a long and unfortunate reign, by his death, which happened in about the fifty-sixth year
A.D. 1364, of his age.

Charles, surnamed the Wise, succeeded his father on the throne of France ; and this monarch, merely by the force of a finely conducted policy, and even though suffering some defeats, restored his country once more to tranquillity and power. He quelled and dissipated a set of banditti, who had associated themselves under the name of Companions, and who had long been a terror to the peaceable inhabitants. He had them inrolled into a body, and led them into the kingdom of Castile against Peter, surnamed the Cruel, whom his subjects had dethroned ; and who, by means of an alliance with the English, endeavoured to get himself reinstated upon the throne. In consequence of these alliances, the English and French again came to an engagement ; their armies on the one side commanded by the Black Prince ; on the other, by Henry of Trastamare, and Bertrand du Guesclin,

clin, one of the most consummate generals, and accomplished characters of the age in which he lived. However, the usual good fortune of the English prince prevailed ; the French lost above twenty thousand men, while only four knights and forty private men on the side of the English were slain.

A.D. 1367.
April 3.

Nevertheless, these victories were attended with very few good effects. The English, by their frequent supplies, had been quite exhausted, and were unable to continue an army in the field. Charles, on the other hand, cautiously forebore coming to any decisive engagement but was contented to let his enemies waste their strength in attempts to plunder a fortified country. When they were retired, he then was sure to sally forth, and possess himself of such places as they were not strong enough to defend. He first fell upon Pontthieu ; the citizens of Abbeville opened their gates to him ; those of St. Valois, Rue, and Crotoy, imitated the example ; and the whole country was, in a little time, reduced to total submission. The southern provinces were, in the same manner, invaded by his generals with equal success ; while the Black Prince, destitute of supplies from England, and wasted by a cruel and consumptive disorder, was obliged

to return to his native country, leaving the affairs of the south of France in a most desperate condition.

In this exigence, the resentment of the king of England was excited to the utmost pitch ; and he seemed resolved to take signal vengeance on his enemies of the continent. But the fortunate occasion seemed now elapsed ; and all his designs were marked with ill success. The earl of Pembroke, and his whole army, were intercepted at sea, and taken prisoners by Henry, king of Castile. This nobleman in person attempted to embark with an army for Bourdeaux ; but was detained by contrary winds, and obliged to lay aside the expedition. Sir Robert Knolles, one of his generals on the continent, at the head of thirty thousand men, was defeated by Bertrand du Guesclin ; while the duke of Lancaster, at the head of twenty-five thousand men, had the mortification of seeing his troops diminished one half by flying parties, without ever coming to a battle. Such was the picture that presented itself to this victorious monarch in the decline of life ; and this might well serve as a lesson to the princes of the age, that more permanent advantages are obtained by wisdom than by valour. Added to his other uneasiness,

nefes, he had the mortification to see his authority despised at home. It was in vain that he sought refuge, in his age, from the complaints of his subjects, in the arms of a favourite mistress, whose name was Alice Pierce ; this only served to exasperate his people the more against him, and to turn their indignation into contempt. But what of all other things served to gloom the latter part of this splendid reign, was the approaching death of the Black Prince, whose constitution shewed but too manifestly the symptoms of a speedy dissolution. This valiant and accomplished prince died in the forty-sixth year of his age, leaving behind him a character without a single blemish ; and a degree of sorrow among the people, that time could scarcely alleviate. His affability, clemency, and liberal disposition, have been celebrated by different historians. Though born in an age, in which military virtues alone were held in esteem, he cultivated the arts of peace ; and seemed ever more happy in deserving praise than in obtaining it.

The king was most sensibly affected with the loss of his son ; and tried every art to remove his uneasiness. He had banished his concubine some time before from his presence, but took her again, in hopes of finding some consolation

in

in her company, He removed himself entirely from the duties and burdens of the state, and left his kingdom to be plundered by a set of rapacious ministers. He did not survive the consequences of his bad conduct ; but died about a year after the prince, at Shene in Surry, deserted by all his courtiers, even by those who had grown rich by his bounty. He expired in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and A.D. 1377. the fifty-first of his reign ; a prince more admired than loved by his subjects, and more an object of their applause, than their sorrow.

The reign of Edward was rather brilliant, than truly serviceable to his subjects. If England, during these shining triumphs on the continent, gained any real advantage, it was only that of having a spirit of elegance and honour diffused among the higher ranks of the people. In all conquests, something is gained in civil life from the people subdued ; and as France was at that time evidently more civilized than England, those imitative islanders, as they were then called, adopted the arts of the people they overcame. The meanest soldier in the English army now began to follow his leader from love, and not compulsion ; he was brave from sentiment alone ; and had the honour of his country beating in his breast,

even

even though in the humblest station. This was the time when chivalry was at its highest pitch ; and many of the successes of England were owing to that romantic spirit, which the king endeavoured to diffuse, and of which he was the most shining example. It was this spirit that, in some measure, served to soften the ferocity of the age ; being a mixture of love, generosity, and war. Instead of being taught the sciences, the sons of the nobility were brought into the field as soon as they were able, and instructed in no other arts but those of arms ; such as the method of fitting on horseback, of wielding the lance, running at the ring, flourishing at a tournament, and addressing a mistress. To attain these, was considered as the sum of all human acquirements ; and though war made their only study, yet the rules of tactics, encampments, stratagems, and fortifications, were almost totally disregarded.

It was in this reign that the order of the Garter was instituted ; the number received into which was to consist of twenty-four persons, beside the king. A vulgar story prevails, but unsupported by any ancient authority, that the countess of Salisbury, at a ball, happening to drop her garter, the king took it up, and presented it to her with these words,

A.D. 1349.

“ Honi

“*Honi soit qui mal y pense ;*” Evil to him, that evil thinks. This accident it is said gave rise to the order and the motto, it being the spirit of the times, to mix love and war together, and for knights to plume themselves upon the slightest tokens that their mistresses were pleased to bestow.

Edward left many children by his queen Philippa of Hainault; his eldest son, the Black Prince, died before him, but left a son, named Richard, who succeeded to the throne; Edward’s second son was Lionel, duke of Clarence; the third was called John of Gaunt, from the place of his birth, and was afterwards created duke of Lancaster; the fourth son was Edmund, earl of Cambridge, and afterwards duke of York; the fifth son was Thomas, duke of Gloucester, the most ambitious and enterprizing of all his family. There were several daughters also; but as there is nothing material in their history, we shall pass over their names without farther notice.



C H A P. XV.

R I C H A R D II.

RIICHARD II. came to the throne of his grandfather, when as yet but eleven years of age, and found the people discontented and poor, the nobles proud and rebellious. A spirit of profusion had entered into the kingdom with the spirit of gallantry ; which, while it produced indolence and rapacity among the higher

higher orders, produced want and disobedience among the poor.

As the king was a minor, the government was vested in the hands of his three uncles, the dukes of Lancaster, York, and Gloucester ; the difference of whose dispositions, it was supposed, would serve to check the defects of each other. Lancaster, though experienced during the late reign in government, was neither popular nor enterprizing ; York was indolent and weak ; Gloucester, turbulent popular, and ambitious. Under the secret influence of these, without any regency being appointed, the whole system of government was kept together for some years ; the authority established during the former reign, still continued to operate in this.

But though government was carried on, yet it was not without many commotions, arising either from the impatience of the people, or the ambition of the great : as the late king had left the kingdom involved in many dangerous and expensive wars ; and as these demanded large and constant supplies, the murmurs of the people increased in proportion. Nor were they lessened by the manner of carrying on these expeditions ; which, in general, were languid, and upon the whole unsuccessful.

The

The duke of Lancaster laid claim to the crown of Castile, and made a fruitless expedition ; the war with France produced no enterprize of lustre, and that with Scotland was rather unsuccessful. The expences, however, of the armaments to face the enemy on every side, and a want of economy in the administration, entirely exhausted the treasury ; and a new tax of three groats, on every person above fifteen, was granted by parliament as a supply. The indignation of the people had been for some time increasing, but a tax so inequitable, in which the rich paid no more than the poor, kindled the resentment of the latter into flame.

Notwithstanding the numbers who by war, by a residence in towns, and by other means had become free, yet there was still multitudes in the country, who had lands in villenage, that were only slaves to the lords from whom they held. These had seen the advantages of liberty, from its effects upon those of equal rank who had gone to live in towns ; and they panted for a participation of those advantages. Several of these had become opulent enough to purchase their freedom ; but by an unjust act of parliament in this reign, these purchases were declared of no validity. This act the peasants considered as an infrac-

tion of the laws of humanity, and such indeed it must be allowed to have been. But it had long been the prescriptive manner of reasoning, to have no regard for the rights of a certain class of men who were supposed too low for justice. The seeds of discontent were still more cultivated by the preaching of several men, who went about the country, inculcating the natural equality of mankind; and consequently, the right that all had to an equal participation of the goods of nature. Hitherto we have seen popular insurrections only in towns ; but we now find the spirit of freedom gaining ground in the country. Our citizens at first began to perceive their own strength ; and not till after did the peasantry, who had been annexed to the soil, claim a share in those advantages. We in this first instance, find a knowledge of the rights of humanity, diffusing itself even to the very lowest of the people, and exerting itself in rude and terrible efforts for freedom.

The minds of the peasants, being thus prepared for insurrection, the manner of collecting this unjust poll-tax, soon furnished them with a pretext for beginning the revolt. It began in Essex, where a report was industriously spread, that the peasants were to be destroyed, their houses burned, and their farms plundered.

A black-

A blacksmith, well known by the name of Wat Tyler, was the first that excited them to arms. The tax-gatherers coming to this man's house, while he was at work, demanded payment for his daughter, which he refused, alledging that she was under the age mentioned in the act. One of the brutal collectors insisted on her being a full grown woman ; and immediately attempted giving a very indecent proof of his assertion. This provoked the father to such a degree, that he instantly struck him dead with a blow of his hammer. The standers by applauded his spirit ; and, one and all, resolved to defend his conduct. He was considered as a champion in the cause, and appointed the leader and spokesman of the people. It is easy to imagine the disorders committed by this tumultuous rabble ; the whole neighbourhood rose in arms ; they burnt and plundered wherever they came, and revenged upon their former masters, all those insults which they had long sustained with impunity. As the discontent was general, the insurgents increased in proportion as they approached the capital. The flame soon propagated itself into Kent, Hertfordshire, Surry, Sussex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge, and Lincoln. They were found to amount to above a hundred thousand men,

by the time they were arrived at Blackheath; from whence they sent a message to the king, who had taken shelter in the Tower, desiring a conference with him. With this message Richard was desirous of complying, but was intimidated by their fierce demeanour. In the mean time they had entered the city, burning and plundering the houses of such as were obnoxious, from their power, or remarkable for their riches. They broke into the Savoy palace, belonging to the duke of Lancaster, and put several of his attendants to death. Their animosity was particularly levelled against the lawyers, to whom they shewed no mercy. Such was the vehemence of their fury, that the king began to tremble for his own safety; and, knowing that the Tower was not capable of standing against an assault, he went out among them, and desired to know their demands. To this they made a very humble remonstrance, requiring a general pardon, the abolition of slavery, freedom of commerce in market-towns, and a fixed rent instead of those services required by the tenure of villenage. As these requests were reasonable, the king soon complied; and charters were accordingly made out, ratifying the grant. In the mean time, another body of these insurgents had broke

broke into the Tower, and murdered the chancellor, the primate, and the treasurer, with some other officers of distinction. They then divided themselves into bodies, and took up their quarters in different parts of the city. at the head of one of these was Wat Tyler, who led his men into Smithfield, where he was met by the king, who invited him to a conference, under a pretence of hearing and redressing his grievances. Tyler ordering his companions to retire, till he should give them a signal, boldly ventured to meet the king in the midst of his retinue ; and accordingly began, the conference.' The demands of this demagogue are censured by all the historians of the time, as insolent and extravagant ; and yet nothing can be more just than those they have delivered for him. He required that all slaves should be set free ; that all commonages should be open to the poor as well as to the rich, and that a general pardon should be passed for the late outrages. Whilst he made these demands, he now and then lifted up his sword in a menacing manner ; which insolence so raised the indignation of William Walworth, then mayor of London, attending on the king, that, without considering the danger to which he exposed his majesty, he stunned Tyler with a blow of his

mace ; while one of the king's knights riding up dispatched him with his sword. The mutineers, seeing their leader fall, prepared themselves to take revenge ; and their bows were now bent for execution, when Richard, though not yet quite fifteen years of age, rode up to the rebels, and, with admirable presence of mind, cried out, " What, my people, will you then kill your king ? be not concerned for the loss of your leader ; I myself will now be your general ; follow me into the field, and you shall have whatever you desire." The awed multitude immediately desisted ; they followed the king as if mechanically into the fields, and there he granted them the same charter that he had before given to their companions.

These grants, for a short time, gained the king great popularity ; and it is probable it was his own desire to have them continued ; but the nobles had long tasted the sweets of power, and were unwilling to admit any other to a participation. The parliament soon revoked these charters of enfranchisement and pardon ; the low people were reduced to the same slavish condition as before, and several of the ringleaders were punished with capital severity. The insurrections of the barons against their kings, are branded in our history

with no great air of invective ; but the tumults of the people against the barons, are marked with all the virulence of reproach.

The cruelty which was exercised against the popular leaders upon this occasion, created no small enmity against the king. He had first granted them a charter, which implied the justice of their demands ; and he was seen, soon after, weak enough to revoke what he had before allowed the justice of. It is probable also, that his uncles were not backward in increasing this general dislike against him ; as by that means they were more like to continue in their present authority. His own capricious conduct, indeed, might very well countenance them in the restrictions they placed upon him ; as he very soon testified an eager desire to govern, without any of the requisites to fit him for such a difficult undertaking : he soon discovered an attachment to favourites, without any merit on their side to entitle them to such flattering distinctions. Robert Vere, earl of Oxford, a young man, whose person was faultless, but whose morals were debauched, had acquired an entire ascendant over him. This nobleman was first created marquis of Dublin, and then duke of Ireland, with the entire sovereignty, during life, of that island. He gave him his own

cousin in marriage ; and soon after permitted him to repudiate her for another lady, of whom he was enamoured. He soon became the channel through which all royal favour passed to the people ; and he possessed all the power, while the king had only the shadow of royalty.

A partiality in princes ever produces animosity among their subjects. Those noblemen, who were either treated with disrespect by the favourite, or who thought that they had themselves better pretensions to favour, instantly took the alarm, and combined against him. At the head of this association were Mowbray earl of Nottingham, Fitz Alan earl of Arundel, Percy earl of Northumberland, Montacute earl of Salisbury, and Beauchamp earl of Warwick. These uniting, resolved on the destruction of the favourite ; and they began by marking out Michael de la Pole, who was then chancellor, and Oxford's chief friend and supporter, as the first object of their vengeance. He was accordingly impeached in parliament ; and although nothing material was alledged against him, such was the interest of the conspiring barons, that he was condemned, and deprived of his office.

From

From punishing his ministers, they soon after ventured to attack the king in person. Under a pretence that he was as yet unable to govern, although he was at that time twenty-one, they appointed a commission of fourteen persons, upon whom the sovereign power was to be transferred for a year. This was, in fact, totally depriving the king of all power, and oppressing the kingdom with a confirmed aristocracy, A.D. 1386. This measure was driven forward by the duke of Gloucester; and none but those of his own faction were admitted as members of the committee. It was not without a struggle that the king saw himself thus totally divested of authority; he endeavoured first to gain over the parliament to his interests, by influencing the sheriffs of each county, who were then the only returning officers. This measure failing, he applied to the judges; and they, either from motives of interest, or from conviction, declared that the commission which had deprived him of his authority, was unlawful; and that those who procured or advised it, were punishable with death. This sentence was quickly opposed by declarations from the lords; the duke of Gloucester saw his danger if the king should prevail; and secretly assembling his party, he appeared in-

arms at Haringay Park, near Highgate, at the head of a body of men, more than sufficient to intimidate the king, and all his adherents. These insurgents, sensible of their own power, were now resolved to make use of the occasion ; and began by demanding of the king the names of those who had advised him to his late rash measures. A few days after they appeared armed in his presence, and accused, by name, the archbishop of York, the duke of Ireland, the earl of Suffolk, and sir Robert Tresilian, one of the judges who had declared in his favour, together with sir Nicholas Bember, as public and dangerous enemies to the state. It was now too late for the opposite party to attempt any other vindication of their conduct than by arms. The duke of Ireland fled into Cheshire, where he attempted to raise a body of forces ; but was quickly obliged to fly into Flanders, on the arrival of the duke of Gloucester with a superior army. Soon after the king was obliged to summon a parliament ; an accusation was drawn up against five of his counsellors ; of these only sir Nicholas Bember was present ; and he was quickly found guilty, condemned, and executed, together with sir Robert Tresilian, who had been discovered and taken during the interval.

serval. But the blood of one or two was not sufficient to satiate the resentment of the duke of Gloucester; lord Beauchamp of Holt was shortly after condemned and executed; and sir Simon Burley, who had been appointed the king's governor, shared the same fate, although the queen continued for three hours on her knees before the duke, imploring his pardon.

It might be supposed, that after such a total subversion of the royal power, there would be no more struggles, during this reign, between the prince and his nominal subjects; but whether from the fluctuation of opinions among the people, or from the influence of a military force, which had been lately levied against France, we find Richard once more resolved to shake off that power, which had long controled him, and actually bringing the parliament to second his resolutions.

In an extraordinary council of the nobility, A.D. 1382. assembled after Easter, he, to the astonishment of all present, desired to know his age; and being told that he was turned of two and twenty, he alledged, that it was time then for him to govern without help; and that there was no reason that he should be deprived of those rights, which the meanest of his subjects

jects enjoyed. The lords answering, in some confusion, that he had certainly an indisputable right to take upon himself the government of the kingdom : “ Yes, replied he, I have long “ been under the government of tutors ; and “ I will now first shew my right to power by “ their removal.” He then ordered Thomas Arundel, whom the commissioners had lately appointed chancellor, to give up the seal, which he next day delivered to William of Wickham, bishop of Winchester. He next removed the duke of Gloucester, the earl of Warwick, and other lords of the opposition, from the council. The bishop of Hereford lost his office of treasurer ; the earl of Arundel was deprived of the post of high-admiral ; all the great officers of the household, as well as the judges, were changed ; and all the offices felt the influence of this extraordinary revolution.

The king being thus left at liberty to conduct the business of government at discretion, began by shewing many marks of moderation towards those who before had endeavoured to depress his power ; he seemed to be entirely reconciled to his uncles ; and he remitted some subsidies which had been granted him, that acquired him for a time the affections of the people.

people. But he wanted those arts that are usually found to procure a lasting respect; he was fond of luxurious pleasures, and idle ostentation; he admitted the meanest ranks to his familiarity; and his conversation was not adapted to impress them with a reverence for his morals or abilities. His military talents, on which mankind then placed the greatest value, were seldom exerted, and never with any great success. The French war was scarce heard of; and some successful inroads of the Scots, particularly that which brought on a disputed victory at Otterbourne, were only opposed by those barons whose possessions lay along the frontier. He gained indeed some reputation for arms in Ireland; but his successes there were too insignificant to give him a decisive character. From thence, the small regard which the public bore his person, disposed them to murmur against his administration, and to receive with avidity every complaint which discontent, or ambition, suggested to his prejudice.

Whether the duke of Gloucester was secretly displeased with this mean disposition in his royal nephew, or wanted to make himself king by fomenting jealousies against him, must remain for ever unknown; but certain it is, that

A. D. 1396. that he used every art to increase the aversion of the nation against him, and to establish his own popularity. He represented the peace which had been just then concluded with France, as the result of the king's pusillanimity ; and plausibly appeared to lament that Richard should have degenerated so far from the heroic virtues of his father. He frequently spoke with contempt of the king's person and government, and deliberated concerning the lawfulness of throwing off all allegiance to him. These were insults that deserved to be chastised in any subject ; but that called aloud for punishment in him, whose popularity was dangerous, and who more than once had testified a disposition to rebel. As all his conduct was secretly observed by the king's emissaries, Richard at length formed a resolution of ridding himself entirely both of him and his faction, sensible that he then had the parliament entirely at his disposal. He accordingly ordered Gloucester to be immediately arrested, and sent over to Calais, at which place there was no danger of a rescue from his numerous adherents. The earls of Arundel and Warwick were seized at the same time ; and a parliament was summoned at Westminster, which the king knew to be obedient

dient to his will. This parliament, as he was apprized, passed whatever acts he thought proper to dictate; they annulled for ever the commission of fourteen, which had usurped upon his authority; they repealed all those acts which had condemned his former ministers; and revoked the general pardon which the king had granted, upon his assuming the reins of government into his own hands. In consequence of this, several of the party of Gloucester were impeached, condemned, and executed. Fitz Alan, archbishop of Canterbury, was banished the kingdom, and his temporalities sequestered. The earl of Arundel vainly attempted to plead the king's general pardon, to stop his execution; the earl of Warwick shewing signs of contrition, had his life spared, but was banished to the Isle of Man. The greatest criminal yet remained; and a warrant was accordingly issued to the earl mareschal, governor of Calais, to bring over the duke of Gloucester to take his trial, as the rest had done. It is probable this nobleman would have shared the same fate with the rest of his party; but he was privately dispatched in prison, being smothered, as it afterwards appeared, between two pillows, by his keepers.

The

The death of a nobleman so popular as the duke, did not fail to increase those animosities, which had already taken deep root in the kingdom. The aggrandisement of some new favourites, contributed still more to make the king odious ; but though he seemed resolved, by all his actions, to set his subjects against him, it was accident that gave the occasion for his overthrow. After the destruction of the duke of Gloucester, and the heads of that party, a misunderstanding broke out among those noblemen, who had joined in the prosecution. The duke of Hereford appeared in parliament, and accused the duke of Norfolk of having spoken seditious words against his majesty, in a private conversation. Norfolk denied the charge; gave Hereford the lie; and offered to prove his innocence by single combat. As proofs were wanting for legal trial, the lords readily acquiesced in that mode of determination ; the time and place were appointed ; and the whole nation waited with anxious suspense for the event. At length the day arrived, on which this duel was to be fought ; and as combats of this kind were then very prevalent, it may not be amiss to describe the ceremonies on that occasion. Hereford, the challenger, first appeared on a white charger, gaily caparisoned, armed at all

all points, and holding his drawn sword. When he approached the lists, the mareschal demanded his name and busines; to which he replied, "I am Henry of Lancaster, duke of Hereford, come hither according to my duty, against Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, a false traitor to God and the king, the realm, and me." Then taking the oath that his quarrel was just and true, he desired to enter the lists, which being granted, he sheathed his sword, pulled down his beaver, croffed himself on the forehead, seized his lance, passed the barrier, alighted, and sat down in a chair of green velvet, placed at one end of the lists. He had scarce taken his seat when the king came into the field with great pomp, attended by the lords, the count de St. Pol, who came from France on purpose to see this famous trial, and ten thousand men at arms, to prevent tumults and disturbances. His majesty being seated in his chair of state, the king at arms proclaimed, that none but such as were appointed to marshal the field, should presume to touch the lists upon pain of death. Then another herald proclaimed aloud, "Behold here Henry of Lancaster, duke of Hereford, who has entered the lists to perform his devoir against Thomas Mowbray, duke of

" of Norfolk, on pain of being counted false
" and recreant." Just then the duke of Norfolk appeared in arms, mounted upon a barbed horse, with a coat of arms of crimson velvet embroidered with lions of silver, and mulberry trees; and having taken his oath before the constable and mareschal, entered the field, exclaiming aloud, " God defend the right." Then alighting from his horse, he placed himself in a chair of crimson velvet opposite to his antagonist, at the other end of the lists. After which, the mareschal having measured their lances, delivered one to the challenger, and sent a knight with the other to the duke of Norfolk; and proclamation was made that they should prepare for the combat. Accordingly, mounting their horses, and closing their beavers, they fixed their launces in rest, and the trumpets sounded the charge. The duke of Hereford began his career with great violence; but, before he could join his antagonist, the king threw down his warder, and the heralds interposed. By the advice and authority of his parliamentary commissioners, he stopped the combat, and ordered both the combatants to leave the kingdom. The duke of Norfolk he banished for life, but the duke of Hereford only for ten years. Thus the one

was

was condemned to exile without being charged with any offence, and the other without being convicted of any crime. The duke of Norfolk was overwhelmed with grief and despondence at the judgment awarded against him; he retired to Venice, where, in a little time after, he died of a broken heart. Hereford's behaviour on this occasion was resigned and submissive, which so pleased the king, that he consented to shorten the date of his banishment four years; and he also granted him letters patent, ensuring him the enjoyment of any inheritance which should fall to him during his absence. But nothing could be more fluctuating than Richard's promises or friendship. The earl of Hereford retiring into Flanders, and from thence to Paris, found there a very favourable reception from the French king. He even opened a treaty of marriage with the daughter of the duke of Berry, uncle to the king of France; but was prevented from completing the alliance by the interest of Richard, who, dreading the increasing power of the banished earl, sent over the earl of Salisbury to Paris, with instructions to break the match. Such an unexpected injury could not fail to aggravate the resentment of Hereford; but he had still more cogent reasons for anger, upon the death of his father, the

duke of Lancaster, which happened shortly after. Richard, as we before observed, had given him letters patent, empowering him to possess any accidental successions that should fall to him while abroad; but being now afraid of strengthening the hands of a man whom he had injured, he revoked those letters, and retained the possession of the Lancaster estate to himself.

Such complicated injuries served to inflame the resentment of Hereford against the king; and although he had hitherto concealed them, he now set no bounds to his indignation; but even conceived a desire of dethroning a person who had shewn himself so unworthy of power. Indeed, no man could be better qualified for an enterprize of this nature, than the earl of Hereford; he was cool, cautious, discerning, and resolute. He had served with distinction against the infidels of Lithuania; and he had thus joined to his other merits, those of piety and valour. He was the idol of the soldiery, and the favourite of the people; he was immensely rich, and by blood, or alliance, connected with all the great families of the nation. On the other hand, the king finding himself above all restraint, gave himself up to a soft effeminate life, regardless of

of his own safety, and of the good of the public. His ministers following the example of their sovereign, gave little attention to business; but saw, without any concern, the honour of the nation sinking into contempt. In this situation, all people naturally turned their eyes upon the banished earl, as the only person from whom they could expect relief, or redress. He was stimulated by private injuries; and had alliances and fortune sufficient to give weight to his measures. The malcontents only waited for the absence of the king to put their schemes in execution; and for these an opportunity was quickly offered.

The earl of Marche, presumptive heir to the crown, having been appointed the king's lieutenant in Ireland, was slain in a skirmish with the natives of that country, which so incensed Richard, that, unmindful of his precarious situation at home, he resolved, with a numerous army, to revenge his death in person. The duke of Lancaster (for that was the title which Hereford assumed, upon the death of his father) being informed of Richard's departure for Ireland, instantly embarked at Nantz, with a retinue of sixty persons, in three small vessels, and landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire. The earl of Northumberland, who had long been a

malcontent, together with Henry Percy, his son, who, from his ardent valour, was furnished Hotspur, immediately joined him with their forces. After this junction the concourse of people coming to list under his banner, was so great, that in a few days his army amounted to threescore thousand men.

The duke of York had been left guardian of the realm during Richard's absence; but his efforts were ineffectual, as the most powerful persons who espoused the king's interests were then actually with him in Ireland. The duke, however, assembled a body of forty thousand men at St. Alban's; but found them either quite dispirited, or more attached to the cause of the rebels, than of the crown. It had been Hereford's policy, from the beginning, to hide the real motives of his expedition, and to give out that he only aimed at the recovery of his patrimony and dukedom. Upon the present occasion, therefore, he entreated the duke of York not to oppose a loyal and humble suppliant in the recovery of his just rights; but to concur in a measure that was more likely to promote the king's honour, than injure his interests. York was deceived by these specious professions; he declared, that he would not only approve, but assist him in his pretensions; and both

both armies meeting, embraced with acclamations of joy.

Whilst these things were transacting in England, Richard continued in Ireland in perfect security. Contrary winds, which at that time continued to blow for three weeks together, prevented his receiving any news of the rebellion which was begun in his native dominions. Upon the first information, therefore, he immediately imprisoned the earl of Hereford's brothers, whom he had taken over with him, and then resolved to go immediately over to fight the enemy in person. Yet, ever wavering in his resolutions, he was persuaded to stay some time longer, till he could prepare ships to transport all his forces together. This delay completed his ruin; so that when he landed at Milford-haven with a body of twenty thousand men, he had the mortification to find that the duke of York had already espoused the interests of his rival, and that his force was every way inferior to that of the enemy. He now, therefore, saw himself in a dreadful situation, in the midst of an enraged people, without any friend on whom to rely; and forsaken by those, who, in the sunshine of his power, had only contributed to fan his follies. His little army gradually began to desert him, till at last he

found that he had not above six thousand men, who followed his standard. Thus, not knowing whom to trust to, or where to turn, he saw no other hopes of safety, but to throw himself upon the generosity of his enemy, and to gain from pity, what he could not obtain by arms. He therefore sent Hereford word that he was ready to submit to whatever terms he thought proper to prescribe; and that he earnestly desired a conference. For this purpose, the earl appointed him to meet at a castle within about

A.D. 1399. ten miles of Chester, where he came the next day with his whole army. Richard, who the day before had been brought thither by the duke of Northumberland, descrying his rival's approach from the walls, went down to receive him; while Hereford, after some ceremony, entered the castle in complete armour, only his head was bare, in compliment to the fallen king. Richard received him with that open air for which he had been remarkable, and kindly bade him welcome. " My lord the king, returned the earl, with a cool respectful bow, I am come sooner than you appointed; because your people say, that for one and twenty years you have governed with rigour and indiscretion. They are very ill satisfied with your con-

" duct; but, if it please God, I will help you
" to govern them better for the time to come."
To this declaration the king made no other
answer, but " Fair cousin, since it pleases you,
" it pleases us likewise."

But Hereford's haughty answer was not the only mortification the unfortunate Richard was to endure. After a short conversation with some of the king's attendants, Hereford ordered the king's horses to be brought out of the stable; and two wretched animals being produced, Richard was placed upon one, and his favourite, the earl of Salisbury, upon the other. In this mean equipage they rode to Chester; and were conveyed to the castle, with a great noise of trumpets, and through a vast concourse of people, who were no way moved at the sight. In this manner he was led triumphantly along, from town to town, amidst multitudes who scoffed at him, and extolled his rival. Long live the good duke of Lancaster, our deliverer! was the general cry; but as for the king, to use the pathetic words of the poet, " None cried God bless him." Thus, after repeated indignities, he was confined a close prisoner in the Tower; there, if possible, to undergo a still greater variety of studied insolence, and flagrant contempt. The wretch-

ed monarch, humbled in this manner, began to lose the pride of a king with the splendours of royalty, and his spirits sunk to his circumstances. There was no great difficulty, therefore, in inducing him to sign a deed, by which he renounced his crown, as being unqualified for governing the kingdom. Upon this resignation Hereford founded his principal claim; but willing to fortify his pretensions with every appearance of justice, he called a parliament, which was readily brought to approve and confirm his claims. A frivolous charge of thirty-three articles was drawn up, and found valid against the king; upon which he was solemnly deposed, and the earl of Hereford elected in his stead, by the title of Henry IV. Thus began the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster; which, for several years after, deluged the kingdom with blood; and yet, in the end, contributed to settle and confirm the constitution.

When Richard was deposed, the earl of Northumberland made a motion in the house of peers, demanding the advice of parliament, with regard to the future treatment of the deposed king. To this they replied, that he should be imprisoned in some secure place, where his friends and partizans should not be able

able to find him. This was accordingly put in practice; but while he still continued alive, the usurper could not remain in safety. Indeed some conspiracies and commotions, which followed soon after, induced Henry to wish for Richard's death; in consequence of which, out of those assassins that are found in every court, ready to commit the most horrid crimes for reward, went down to the place of this unfortunate monarch's confinement, in the castle of Pomfret; and, with eight of his followers, rushed into his apartment. The king concluding their design was to take away his life, resolved not to fall unrevenged, but to sell it as dearly as he could; wherefore, wresting a pole-ax from one of the murderers, he soon laid four of their number dead at his feet. But he was at length overpowered, and struck dead by the blow of a poll-ax; although some assert, that he was starved in prison. Thus died the unfortunate Richard, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-third of his reign. Though his conduct was blameable, yet the punishment he suffered was greater than his offences; and in the end, his sufferings made more converts to his family and cause, than ever his most meritorious actions could have procured them. He left no posterity, either legitimate or otherwise.

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It was during this reign, that John Wickliff, a secular priest, educated at Oxford, began to propagate his doctrines; and he has the honour of being the first person who had sagacity to see through the errors of the church of Rome, and courage enough to attempt a reformation. He denied the doctrine of the real presence, the supremacy of the church of Rome, and the merit of monastic vows. He maintained that the scriptures were the sole rule of faith; that the church was dependant on the state; that the clergy ought to possess no estates; and that the numerous ceremonies of the church were hurtful to true piety. In short, most of his doctrines were such as the wisdom of posterity thought fit to establish; and Wickliff failed in being a reformer, only because the minds of men were not yet sufficiently ripened for the truths he endeavoured to inculcate. The clergy of that age did not fail to oppose Wickliff with fury; but as his doctrines were pleasing to the higher orders of the laity, he found protection from their indignation. John of Gaunt was his particular friend and favourer; and when summoned to appear before the bishop of London, that nobleman attended him into the court; and defended him both from the resentment of

of the clergy, and the rage of the populace. However, in process of time, he had the satisfaction to see the people, who were at first strongly prejudiced against him, entirely declaring in his favour; and although he was often cited to appear before the prelates, yet, from the estimation he was held in, both among the higher and lower ranks of the laity, he was always dismissed without injury. In this manner he continued during a long life, to lessen the credit of the clergy, both by his preaching and writings; and at last died of a palsy, in the year 1385, at his rectory of Lutterworth, in the county of Leicester; while the clergy took care to represent his death as a judgment from heaven, for his multiplied heresies and impieties,



C H A P. XVI.

H E N R Y IV.

A.D. 1399.

NUMEROUS formalities are seldom used but to cover distrust or injustice. Henry the Fourth, knowing the weakness of his title, was, at least, determined to give his coronation all possible solemnity, and to make religion a cloak to cover his usurpation. Accordingly, particular care was taken to procure a certain oil, said to have been presented by the Virgin

Virgin Mary to Thomas Becket, during his exile. The phial that contained this precious balm had fallen into the hands of a hermit, who gave it to the duke of Lancaster, assuring him, that all kings anointed with that oil, would become true champions of the church. On the present occasion, being seized by Henry among the other jewels of Richard, he was anointed with it in all the forms ; at the same time declaring, that he had ascended the throne by the right of conquest, the resignation of Richard in his favour, and as the most direct descendant of Henry the Third, king of England. These were the formalities made use of to hide his ambition, or perhaps quiet his own fears ; for the heir of the house of Mortimer, who had in the late reign been declared in parliament the true heir of the crown, was still alive, although yet but a boy of seven years of age. Him Henry detained, together with his younger brother, in an honourable custody, at Windsor castle.

But notwithstanding these precautions for his security, Henry soon found that the throne of an usurper is ever a bed of thorns. Such violent animosities broke out among the barons, in the first session of his parliament, that forty challenges were given and received, and

forty gauntlets thrown down, as pledges of the sincerity of their resentment. But though these commotions were seemingly suppressed by his moderation for that time, yet they soon broke out into rebellion; and a conspiracy was set on foot for seizing Henry at Windsor, and replacing Richard on the throne, who was supposed to be yet alive. This plot was set on foot by the earls of Rutland, Kent, Huntington, and lord Spencer, whom Henry had degraded from superior titles, conferred upon them by the late king. The particulars of their scheme were committed to writing, and each of the confederates had a copy signed by all the rest. Among the number of these, the duke of Aumerle was one, furnished with a paper, which he unfortunately dropt out of his bosom, as he was sitting one day at dinner with his father, the duke of York. The father perceiving something fall, privately took it up, and to his great astonishment discovered the contents, which he resolved, with all diligence, to discover to the king, and accordingly rode off with the utmost expedition to Windsor, where the court resided at that juncture. In the mean time, the son finding the sad mischance that happened, and guessing the cause of his father's expedition, was resolved, if possible,

fible, to prevent his information; and hastening by a shorter way, discovered the whole to the king, and obtained the royal pardon before his father could arrive, who coming soon after produced the paper, with the names of the conspirators.

In the mean time, while Henry employed the most vigorous efforts to dispel the rising storm, the conspirators, finding their first intentions frustrated, dressed up one of the late king's servants, named Maudlin, in royal robes, giving out that he was the deposed monarch, whom they had taken from his prison, and were willing to replace on the throne. Pity is a passion for which the English have ever been remarkable; majesty in distress was an object sufficient, at once, to excite their loyalty and compassion; and they accordingly flocked in great numbers round the standard of the conspirators. Their army soon became considerable, and encamped near Cirencester, while the leaders took up their head-quarters within the city; yet so careless or inexperienced were they, that they neglected to place proper guards at the gates and the avenues of the place. This was quickly perceived by the mayor of the town, who was in the interests of the king; this magistrate assembling four hundred men in

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the night, secured the gates, so as to exclude the army encamped without, and then he attacked the chiefs within. The earls of Kent and Salisbury were taken, after an obstinate resistance, and beheaded on the spot by the mayor's order. The earls of Huntingdon, and lord Spenser, escaped over the tops of the houses into the camp, in hopes of storming the town at the head of their forces; but they quickly had the mortification to find the tents and baggage abandoned by the soldiers, who, upon hearing the noise and tumult within, had concluded, that a party of the king's army had entered privately to strengthen the townsmen; and under the conviction of this, they fled with the utmost precipitation.

The two lords perceiving that all hope was over, endeavoured to conceal themselves separately; but they were soon after taken, and lost their heads upon the scaffold by the king's order. Their deaths were soon after followed by those of sir Thomas Blount, and sir Benedict Sely; and when the quarters of these unhappy men were brought to London, no less than eighteen bishops, and thirty-four mitred abbots, joined the populace, and met them with the most indecent marks of joy and exultation. In this shocking procession, was seen the earl

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of Rutland carrying the head of lord Spencer, his brother-in-law, in triumph, after having betrayed him. This miscreant had been long enured to blood and treachery : he was instrumental in the murder of his uncle, the duke of Gloucester, to please Richard; he soon after deserted the fallen fortunes of that monarch and joined with Henry; not long after, he entered into a conspiracy against this monarch, after having sworn allegiance to him ; and now, at last, betrayed those very associates whom he had seduced into this enter-
prise, carrying in triumph the marks of his execrable villanies.

But the suppression of a single rebellion was not sufficient to give quiet to a kingdom, threatened with foreign invasions, and torn by intestine discontents. The king of France had actually raised a vast armament to invade England ; but a truce was soon after concluded for eight and twenty years ; and it was agreed, that queen Isabel, who had been married to Richard, but whose marriage had never been consummated, should return to France, her native country. The Scots, shortly after, began to renew their ancient disturbances ; and while the English army marched northward to oppose their incursions, the Welch, on the other

fide, under the conduct of Owen Glendour, attacked the kingdom upon the defenceless quarter. Many were the petty victories gained, and the ravages committed on either part in this contest. The name of Owen Glendour is respected among his countrymen to this very day; but as all his conquests procured no lasting advantage, and as all his victories only terminated in fame, they are scarce worth a place in the page of history. It will be sufficient to observe, that whatever honour the English lost on the side of Wales, they gained an equivalent on that of Scotland; the Welch maintained their ground, although their chieftain, Glendour, was taken prisoner, while the Scots, still fled before the English, and would neither submit, nor yet give them battle.

A.D. 1402.

It was in a skirmish between the Scots and the English, that Archibald, earl of Douglas, with many of the Scottish nobility, were taken, prisoners by the earl of Northumberland, and carried to Alnwick castle. This success was considered at first as of signal advantage; but it was soon attended with consequences that were fatal to the victors. When Henry received intelligence of this victory, he sent the earl orders not to ransom his prisoners, as

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he intended to detain them, in order to encrease his demands, in making peace with Scotland. This message was highly resented by the earl of Northumberland, who, by the laws of war that prevailed in that age, had a right to the ransom of all such as he had taken in battle. The command was still more irksome, as he considered the king as his debtor, both for security and his crown. Indeed, the obligations which Henry owed him, were of a nature the most likely to produce ingratitude on the one side, and discontent on the other. The prince naturally became jealous of that power which had advanced him to the throne ; and the subject thought himself entitled to every favour the crown had to bestow. Not but that Henry had already conferred the highest honours upon him ; he had made him constable of the kingdom, and given him several other employments ; but nothing could satisfy this nobleman's ambition, while the king had any thing left to give. Accordingly, stung with this supposed injury, he resolved to overturn a throne which he had the chief hand in establishing. A scheme was laid, in which the Scots and Welch were to unite their forces, and to assist Northumberland in elevating Mortimer, as the true heir, to the crown of England. When all

things were prepared for the intended insurrection the earl had the mortification to find himself unable to lead on the troops, being seized with a sudden illness at Berwick. But the want of his presence was well supplied by his son Harry Percy, surnamed Hotspur, who took the command of the troops, and marched them towards Shrewsbury, in order to join his forces with those of Glendour, who, some time before, had been exchanged from prison, and had now advanced with his forces as far as Shropshire. Upon the junction of these, two armies, they published a manifesto, which aggravated their real grievances, and invented more. In the mean time, Henry, who had received no intelligence of their designs, was at first greatly surprised at the news of this rebellion. But fortune seemed to befriend him on this occasion ; he had a small army in readiness, which he had intended against the Scots, and knowing the importance of dispatch against such active enemies, he instantly hurried down to Shrewsbury, that he might give the rebels battle.

Upon the approach of the two armies, both sides seemed willing to give a colour to their cause, by shewing a desire of reconciliation ; but when they came to open their mutual demands,

mands, the treaty was turned into abuse and recrimination. On one side was objected rebellion and ingratitude; on the other, tyranny and usurpation. The two armies were pretty nearly equal, each consisting of about twelve thousand men; the animosity on both sides was inflamed to the highest pitch; and no prudence nor military skill could determine on which side the victory might incline. Accordingly, a very bloody engagement ensued, in which the generals on both sides exerted themselves with great bravery. Henry was seen every where in the thickest of the fight; while his valiant son, who was afterwards the renowned conqueror of France, fought by his side, and, though wounded in the face by an arrow, still kept the field, and performed astonishing acts of valour. On the other side, the daring Hotspur supported that renown, which he had acquired in so many bloody engagements, and every where fought out the king as a noble object of his indignation. At last, however, his death, from an unknown hand, decided the victory; and the fortune of Henry once more prevailed. On that bloody day, it is said that no less than two thousand three hundred gentlemen were slain, and about six thousand private men, of whom two thirds were of Hotspur's army.

While this furious transaction was going forward, Northumberland, who was lately recovered from his indisposition, was advancing with a body of troops to reinforce the army of the malcontents, and take upon him the command. But hearing by the way of his son's and his brother's misfortune, he dismissed his troops, not daring to take the field with so small a force, before an army superior in number, and flushed with recent victory. The earl therefore for a while attempted to find safety by flight, but at last being pressed by his pursuers, and finding himself totally without resource, he chose rather to throw himself upon the king's mercy than lead a precarious and indigent life in exile. Upon his appearing before Henry at York, he pretended that his sole intention in arming was to mediate between the two parties ; and this, though but a very weak apology, seemed to satisfy the king. Northumberland therefore received a pardon ; Henry probably thinking that he was sufficiently punished by the loss of his army, and the death of his favourite son.

But the extinction of one rebellion only seemed to give rise to another. The archbishop of York, who had been promoted during the late reign, entered into a confederacy

racy with the earl of Nottingham, and the earl of Northumberland, who had been so lately pardoned, to dethrone the king, and set young Mortimer in his place. Had the forces of these insurgents co-operated with those that were so lately overthrown, it is possible they might have overpowered any body of men, which the king could bring into the field; but they began their operations just when their confederates were defeated. This powerful combination, however, took the field and published a manifesto; in which they reproached Henry with usurpation, tyranny, and murder; they required that the right line should be restored, and all grievances redressed. The earl of Westmoreland, who had been sent against them with a very inferior force, demanded a conference, to which they readily consented. The chiefs, on each side, met at Skipton, near York, and, in the presence of both armies, entered upon the subject of their grievances and complaints. The archbishop loudly deplored the nation's injuries and his own; the earl of Shrewsbury, not only allowed the justice of his remonstrances, but begged of him to propose the remedies. The archbishop entered upon many stipulations, and the earl granted them all. He now therefore entreated, that since they had nothing more

A.D. 1405. to ask or to fear, that they would dismiss their forces, and trust to his honour for the rest. His specious promises, and plausible manners, led them to their ruin. The insurgents immediately disbanded their troops, while he gave private orders that his own army should not disperse till farther notice; and thus having disqualified them for defence, instantly seizing upon the archbishop, and the earl of Northampton, he carried them to the king. The form of a trial was a very unnecessary ceremony, to men whose fate was pre-determined; the archbishop of York was the first prelate who was capitally punished in England, the earl of Nottingham shared the same fate, and the earl of Northumberland found safety by flying into Scotland; but he was slain a year or two after, in an incursion, by sir Thomas Rokesby, sheriff of Yorkshire.

Such advantages seemed to promise the country, long torn with factions, and threatened with invasions, some degree of repose; but a new calamity now began to appear, which, though small in the beginning, became in the course of ages, attended with most dreadful effects. Since Wickliffe had published his opinions, in the last reign, his doctrines met with so many partizans, that

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the clergy began to tremble for their influence over the minds of the people. They therefore used all their interest to bring the king over to their party ; who had more than once, in former times, declared himself in favour of the new doctrines. But at present, as he was conscious of the weakness of his title to the crown, he was resolved to make use of every support to confirm his pretensions ; and, among others, that offered him by the clergy, was by no means to be thought lightly of. He therefore seemed to listen with great earnestness to their complaints ; and took an occasion to direct his parliament to attend to the conservation of the church, which he asserted was then in danger. How reluctant soever the house of commons might be, to prosecute a sect, whose crime at any rate was but error, the credit of the court and the cabals of the clergy at last obtained an act for the burning obstinate heretics. This statute was no sooner past than the clergy resolved to shew that it was not hung up as an empty terror, but that it would be urged with all the force of which it was capable. William Sawtre, a follower of Wickliffe, and rector of St. Osithe's, London, had been condemned by the convocation of Canterbury, and was soon after burned alive,

alive, by virtue of the king's writ, delivered to the mayor of London. This was the first man that suffered death in England for the sake of religion ; but the fires once kindled, were not likely to be soon extinguished, as the clergy had the power of continuing the flame. They easily perceived, that a power of burning their enemies would revive that share of temporal power, which they had possessed some centuries before ; and in this they were not mistaken. They thus again renewed their pristine authority, but upon very different grounds ; for as in the Saxon times they fixed their power upon the affections, so they now founded it upon the terrors of the people.

A.D. 1407. By these means Henry seemed to surmount all his troubles ; and the calm, which was thus produced, was employed by him in endeavours to acquire popularity, which he had lost by the severities exercised during the preceding part of his reign. For that reason, he often permitted the house of commons to assume powers, which had not been usually exercised by their predecessors. In the sixth year of his reign, when they voted him the supplies, they appointed treasurers of their own, to see the money disbursed for the purposes intended ; and

and required them to deliver in their accounts to the house. They proposed thirty very important articles for the government of the king's household ; and, on the whole, preserved their privileges and freedoms more entire, during his reign, than that of any of his predecessors. But while the king thus laboured, not without success, to retrieve the reputation he had lost, his son Henry, prince of Wales, seemed equally bent on incurring the public aversion. He became notorious for all kinds of debauchery ; and ever chose to be surrounded by a set of wretches, who took pride in committing the most illegal acts, with the prince at their head. The king was not a little mortified at this degeneracy in his eldest son, who seemed entirely forgetful of his station, although he had already exhibited repeated proofs of his valour, conduct, and generosity. Such were the excesses into which he ran, that one of his dissolute companions having been brought to trial before sir William Gascoigne, chief-justice of the king's bench, for some misdemeanor, the prince was so exasperated at the issue of the trial, that he struck the judge in open court. The venerable magistrate, who knew the reverence that was due to his station, behaved with a dignity that became his

his office, and immediately ordered the prince to be committed to prison. When this transaction was reported to the king, who was an excellent judge of mankind, he could not help exclaiming in a transport ; “ Happy is the king, that has a magistrate endowed with courage to execute the laws upon such an offender; still more happy in having a son, willing to submit to such a chastisement.” This, in fact, is one of the first great instances we read in the English history, of a magistrate doing justice in opposition to power ; since, upon many former occasions, we find the judges only ministers of royal caprice.

Henry, whose health had for some time been declining, did not long out-live this transaction. He was subject to fits, which bereaved him, for the time, of his sences; and which, at last, brought on the near approach of death at Westminster. As his constitution decayed, his fears of losing the crown redoubled, even to a childish anxiety. He could not be persuaded to sleep, unless the royal diadem were laid upon his pillow. He resolved to take the cross, and fight the cause of the pilgrims to Jerusalem ; and even imparted his designs to a great council, demanding their opinions relative to his intended journey : but his disorder

der increasing to a violent degree, he was obliged to lay aside his scheme, and to prepare for a journey of much greater importance. In this situation, as he was one day in a violent paroxysm, the prince of Wales took up the crown and carried it away ; but the king soon after recovering his senses, and missing the crown, demanded what was become of it ? Being informed that the prince of Wales had carried it off : “ What ! said the king would he “ rob me of my right before my death ?” But the prince just then entering the room, assured his father, that he had no such motives in what he had done, went and replaced the crown where he had found it, and having received his father’s blessing, dutifully retired. The king was taken with his last fit, while he was at his devotions before the shrine of St. Edward the Confessor, in Westminster Abbey, and from thence he was carried to the Jerusalem Chamber. When he had recovered from his swoon, perceiving himself in a strange place, he desired to know where he was, and if the apartment had any particular name : being informed that it was called the Jerusalem Chamber, he said, that he then perceived a prophecy was fulfilled, which declared that he should die in Jerusalem. Thus saying, and recommend-

ing his soul to his Maker; he soon after expired, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and the fourteenth of his reign.

If we consider this monarch on one side of his character, he will appear an object worthy the highest applause; if on the other, of our warmest indignation. As a man, he was valiant, prudent, cool, and sagacious. These virtues adorned him in his private character; nor did his vices appear, till ambition brought him within sight of a throne: it was then that he was discovered to be unjust, cruel, gloomy, and tyrannical; and though his reign contributed much to the happiness of his subjects, yet it was entirely destructive of his own. He was twice married; by his first wife, Mary de Bohun, he had four sons, Henry, his successor; Thomas, duke of Clarence; John, duke of Bedford; Humphry, duke of Gloucester: and two daughters. By his second wife he had no issue.



C H A P. XVII.

H E N R Y V.

TH E death of Henry IV. gave the people A.D. 1413. but very little concern, as he had always governed them rather by their fears than their affections. But the rejoicings made for the succession of his son, notwithstanding his extravagancies, were manifest and sincere. In the very height and madness of the revel, he would often give instances of the noblest disposition;

position ; and, though he did not practise the virtues of temperance, he always shewed that he esteemed them. But it was his courage which, in that material age, chiefly won the people's affection and applause. Courage, and superstition then made up the whole system of human duty ; nor had the age any other idea of heroism, but what was the result of this combination.

The first steps taken by the young king confirmed all those prepossessions entertained in his favour. He called together his former companions, acquainted them with his intended reformation ; exhorted them to follow his example ; and thus dismissed them from his presence, allowing them a competency to subsist upon, till he saw them worthy of higher promotion. The faithful ministers of his father, at first, indeed, began to tremble for their former justice, in the administration of their duty ; but he soon eased them of their fears, by taking them into his friendship and confidence. Sir William Gascoigne, who thought himself the most obnoxious, met with praises instead of reproaches, and was exhorted to persevere in the same rigorous and impartial execution of justice.

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But Henry did not stop here; he shewed himself willing to correct, not only his own private errors, but those of the former reign. He expressed the deepest sorrow for the fate of the unhappy Richard, and ordered his funeral obsequies to be performed with royal solemnity. He seemed ambitious to bury all party-distinctions in oblivion; the good men of either party were only dear to him; and the bad vainly alledged their loyalty as an extenuation of their vices. The exhortations, as well as the example of the prince, gave encouragement to virtue; all parties were equally attached to so just a prince, and the defects of his title were forgot, amidst the lustre of his admirable qualities.

In this manner, the people seemed happy in their new king; but it is not in the power of man to raise himself entirely above the prejudices of the age in which he lives, or to correct those abuses, which often employ the sagacity of whole centuries to discover. The vices of the clergy had drawn upon them the contempt and detestation of the people; but they were resolved to continue their ancient power, not by reforming themselves, but by persecuting those who opposed them. The heresy of Wickliff, or Lollardism, as it was called, be-

gan to spread every day more and more, while it received a new lustre from the protection and preaching of Sir John Oldcastle, baron of Cobham, who had been one of the king's domestics, and stood high in his favour. His character, both for civil and military excellence, pointed him out to Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, as the proper victim of ecclesiastical vengeance ; and he applied to the king for permission to indict lord Cobham, as a miscreant guilty of the most atrocious heresy. But the generous nature of the prince was averse to such sanguinary methods of conversion ; and he begged leave first to be permitted to try what effects the arts of reason and persuasion would produce upon this bold leader of his sect. He accordingly desired a private conference with lord Cobham ; but he found that nobleman obstinate in his opinions, and determined rather to part with life, than what he believed upon conviction. The king, therefore, finding him immovable, gave him up to the fury of his enemies. Persecution ever propagates those errors which it aims at abolishing. The primate indicted lord Cobham ; and, with the assistance of his suffragans, condemned him as an heretic to be burnt alive. Cobham, however, escaping from the Tower,

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in which he was confined, the day before his execution, privately went among his party; and stimulating their zeal, led them up to London, to take a signal revenge of his enemies. But the king, apprised of his intentions, ordered that the city-gates should be shut; and coming by night with his guards into St. Giles's fields, seized such of the conspirators as appeared, and afterwards laid hold of several parties that were hastening to the appointed place. Some of these were executed, but the greater number pardoned. Cobham himself found means of escaping for that time; but he was taken about four years after; and never did the cruelty of man invent, or crimes draw down, such torments as he was made to endure. He was hung up with a chain by the middle; and thus at a slow fire burned, or rather roasted, alive.

Such spectacles as these must naturally excite the disgust of the people, not only against the clergy, but the government itself. Henry, to turn their minds from such hideous scenes, resolved to take the advantage of the troubles in which France was at that time engaged, and pursue the advice of his dying father, who gave it as his last instructions, that he should employ his subjects in foreign expeditions, and

thus give all the restless spirits occupation for their quietude. Charles the Fifth, who was then king of France, was subject to frequent fits of lunacy, which totally disqualifed him from reigning. During the paroxysms of his disease, the ambition of his vassals and courtiers had room for exertion ; and they grew powerful from their sovereign's weakness. The administration of affairs was disputed between his brother Lewis, duke of Orleans, and his cousin-german, John, duke of Burgundy. Isabella, his queen, also had her party ; and the king vainly attempted to secure one also in his favour. Each of these, as they happened to prevail, branded their captives with the name of traitors ; and the gibbets were at once hung with the bodies of the accused and the accusers. This, therefore, was thought by Henry a favourable opportunity to recover from France those grants, that had been formerly given up by treaty. But previously, to give his intended expedition the appearance of justice, he sent over ambassadors to Paris, offering a perpetual peace and alliance, on condition of being put in possession of all those provinces, which had been ravished from the English during the former reign, and of espousing Catharine, the French king's daughter,

ter, in marriage, with a suitable dowry. Tho' the French court was at that time extremely averse to war, yet the exorbitance of these demands could not be complied with; and Henry very probably made them in hopes of a denial. He therefore assembled a great fleet and army at Southampton; and having allured all the military men of the kingdom to attend him, from the hopes of conquest, he put to sea, and landed at Harfleur, at the head of an army of six thousand men at arms, and twenty-four thousand foot, mostly archers.

His first operations were upon Harfleur; which being pressed hard, promised at a certain day to surrender, unless relieved before that time. The day arriving, and the garrison, unmindful of their engagement, still resolving to defend the place, Henry ordered an assault to be made, took the town by storm, and put all the garrison to the sword. From thence, the victor advanced farther into the country, which had been already rendered desolate by factions, and which he now totally laid waste. But although the enemy made but a feeble resistance, yet the climate seemed to fight against the English; a contagious dysentery carrying off three parts of Henry's army. In such a situation he had re-

course to an expedient common enough in that barbarous age, to inspire his troops with confidence in their general. He challenged the dauphin, who commanded in the French army, to single combat, offering to stake his pretensions on the event. This challenge, as might naturally be expected, was rejected; and the French, though disagreeing internally, at last seemed to unite, at the appearance of the common danger. A numerous army of fourteen thousand men at arms, and forty thousand foot, was by this time assembled, under the command of count Albret; and was now placed to intercept Henry's weakened forces on their return. The English monarch, when it was too late, began to repent of his rash inroad into a country, where disease, and a powerful army, every where threatened destruction; he therefore began to think of retiring into Calais. In this retreat, which was at once both painful and dangerous, Henry took every precaution to inspire his troops with patience and perseverance; and shewed them in his own person the brightest example of fortitude and resignation. He was continually harrassed on his march by flying parties of the enemy; and whenever he attempted to pass the river Somme, over which his march lay,

he saw troops, on the other side, ready to oppose his passage. However, he was so fortunate as to seize by surprize a passage near St. Quintin, which had not been sufficiently guarded : and there he safely carried over his army.

But the enemy was still resolved to intercept his retreat ; and after he had passed the small river of Tertrois at Blangi, he was surprised to observe from the heights, the whole French army drawn up in the plains of Azincourt ; and so posted, that it was impossible for him to proceed on his march, without coming to an engagement. No situation could be more unfavourable than that in which he then found himself. His army was wasted with disease ; the soldiers spirits worn down with fatigue, destitute of provisions, and discouraged by their retreat. Their whole body amounted but to nine thousand men ; and these were to sustain the shock of an enemy near ten times their number, headed by expert generals, and plentifully supplied with provisions. This disparity, as it depressed the English, so it raised the courage of the French in proportion ; and so confident were they of success, that they began to treat for the ransom of their prisoners. Henry, on the other hand, though

sensible of his extreme danger, did not omit any circumstance that could assist his situation. As the enemy were so much superior, he drew up his army on a narrow ground between two woods, which guarded each flank ; and he patiently expected, in that position, the attack of the enemy. The constable of France was at the head of one army ; and Henry himself, with Edward, duke of York, commanded the other. For a time both armies, as if afraid to begin, kept silently gazing at each other, neither being willing to break their ranks by making the onset ; which Henry perceiving, with a cheerful countenance cried out, “ My friends, “ since they will not begin, it is ours to set “ them the example ; come on, and the Blessed “ Trinity be our protection.” Upon this, the whole army set forward with a shout, while the French still continued to wait their approach with intrepidity. The English archers, who had long been famous for their great skill, first let fly a shower of arrows three feet long, which did great execution. The French cavalry advancing to repel these, two hundred bow-men, who lay till then concealed, rising on a sudden, let fly among them, and produced such a confusion, that the archers threw by their arrows, and rushing in, fell upon them sword

sword in hand. The French at first repulsed the assailants, who were enfeebled by disease; but they soon made up the defect by their valour; and resolving to conquer or die, burst in upon the enemy with such impetuosity, that the French were soon obliged to give way.

In the mean time a body of English horse, which had been concealed in a neighbouring wood, rushing out, flanked the French infantry, and a general disorder began to ensue. The first line of the enemy being routed, the second line began to march up to interrupt the progress of the victory. Henry, therefore, alighted from his horse, presented himself to the enemy with an undaunted countenance; and at the head of his men fought on foot, encouraging some, and assisting others. Eighteen French cavaliers, who were resolved to kill him, or die in the attempt, rushing from the ranks together, advanced; and one of them stunned the king with a blow of his battle-ax. They then fell upon him in a body; and he was upon the point of sinking under their blows, when David Gam, a valiant Welchman, aided by two of his countrymen, came up to the king's assistance, and soon turned the attention of the assailants from the king to themselves, till at length being overpowered, they fell

fell dead at his feet. Henry had by this time recovered his senses ; and fresh troops advancing to his relief, the eighteen French cavaliers were slain : upon which he knighted the Welchmen, who had so valiantly fallen in his defence. The heat of the engagement still encreasing, Henry's courage seemed also to encrease, and the most dangerous situation was where he fought in person ; his brother, who was stunned by a blow, fell at his feet ; and while the king was piously endeavouring to succour him, he received another blow himself, which threw him upon his knees. But he soon recovered ; and leading on his troops with fresh ardour, they ran headlong upon the enemy ; and put them into such disorder, that their leaders could never after bring them to the charge. The duke of Alençon, who commanded the second line, seeing it fly, resolved, by one desperate stroke; to retrieve the fortune of the day, or fall in the attempt. Wherefore running up to Henry, and at the same time crying aloud, that he was the duke of Alençon, he discharged such a blow on his head, that it carried off part of the king's helmet ; while, in the mean time, Henry not having been able to ward off the blow, returned it, by striking the duke to the ground, and he was soon killed

ed by the surrounding croud; all the king's efforts to save him proving ineffectual. In this manner, the French were overthrown in every part of the field; their number, being crowded into a very narrow space, were incapable of either flying, or making any resistance; so that they covered the ground with heaps of slain. After all appearance of opposition was over, the English had leisure to make prisoners; and having advanced with uninterrupted success to the open plain, they there saw the remains of the French rear-guard, which still maintained a shew of opposition. At the same time was heard an alarm from behind, which proceeded from a number of peasants, who had fallen upon the English baggage, and were putting those who guarded it to the sword. Henry, now seeing the enemy on all sides of him, began to entertain apprehensions from his prisoners, the number of whom exceeded even that of his army. He thought it necessary, therefore, to issue general orders for putting them to death; but on the discovery of the certainty of his victory, he stopped the slaughter, and was still able to save a great number. This severity tarnished the glory which his victory would otherwise have acquired: but all the heroism of that age is tinctured with barbarity.

This

This battle was very fatal to France, from the number of princes and nobility slain, or taken prisoners. Among the number of the slain, was the constable of France, the two brothers to the duke of Burgundy, the duke of Alençon, the duke of Barre, and the count de Morle. Among the prisoners, were the duke of Orleans, the duke of Bourbon, with several others of inferior quality. An archbishop of Sens also perished fighting in this battle. The killed are computed on the whole to have amounted to ten thousand men; and as the loss fell chiefly upon the cavalry, it is pretended, that of these eight thousand were gentlemen. The number of prisoners are computed at fourteen thousand. All the English who were slain did not exceed forty, a number amazingly inconsiderable, if we compare the loss with the victory.

A.D. 1415.
Oct. 25.

This victory, how great soever it might have been, was attended with no immediate effects. Henry did not interrupt his retreat a moment after the battle of Azincourt; but carried his prisoners to Calais, and from thence to England, where the parliament, dazzled with the splendour of his late victories, granted him new supplies, though unequal to the expences of a campaign. With these supplies and new levies,

levies, he once more landed an army of twenty-five thousand men in Normandy, and prepared to strike a decisive blow for the crown of France, to which the English monarchs had long made pretensions. That wretched country was now in a most deplorable situation. The whole kingdom appeared as one vast theatre of crimes, murders, injustice, and devastation. The duke of Orleans was assassinated by the Duke of Burgundy; and the duke of Burgundy, in his turn, fell by the treachery of the dauphin. At the same time, the duke's son, desirous of revenging his father's death, entered into a secret treaty with the English; and a league was immediately concluded at Arras, between Henry and the young duke of Burgundy, in which the king promised to revenge the murder of the late duke: and the son seemed to insist upon no further stipulations. Henry, therefore, proceeded in his conquests, without much opposition from any quarter. Several towns and provinces submitted on his approach; the city of Rouen was besieged and taken; Pontoise and Gisors he soon became master of. He even threatened Paris by the terror of his power, and obliged the court to move to Troye. It was at this city that the duke of Burgundy, who had taken

ken upon him the protection of the French king, met Henry in order to ratify that treaty, which was formerly begun, and by which the crown of France was to be transferred to a stranger. The imbecility into which Charles had fallen, made him passive in this remarkable treaty ; and Henry dictated the terms throughout the whole negociation. The principal articles of this treaty were, that Henry should espouse the princess Catharine ; that king Charles should enjoy the title and dignity of king for life ; but that Henry should be declared heir to the crown, and should be intrusted with the present administration of the government ; that France and England should for ever be united under one king, but should still retain their respective laws and privileges ; that Henry should unite his arms with those of king Charles, and the duke of Burgundy, to depress and subdue the dauphin and his partizans. Such was the tenor of a treaty, too repugnant to the real interests of both kingdoms to be of long duration ; but the contending parties were too much blinded by their resentments and jealousies, to see that it is not in the power of princes to barter kingdoms, contrary to the real interests of the community.

It

It was not long after this treaty, that Henry married the princess Catharine; after which he carried his father-in-law to Paris, and took a formal possession of that capital. There he obtained, from the estates of the kingdom, a ratification of the late compact; and then turned his arms, with success, against the adherents of the dauphin, who, in the mean time, wandered about a stranger in his own patrimony, and to his enemies successes only opposed fruitless expostulations.

Henry's supplies were not provided in such plenty, as to enable him to carry on the war without returning in person to prevail upon his parliament for fresh succours; and, upon his arrival in England, though he found his subjects highly pleased with the splendour of his conquests, yet they seemed somewhat doubtful as to the advantage of them. A treaty which in its consequences was likely to transfer the seat of empire from England, was not much relished by the parliament. They therefore, upon various pretences, refused him a supply equal to his exigencies or his demands, but he was resolved on pursuing his schemes; and joining to the supplies granted at home, the contributions levied on the conquered provinces, he was able once more to assemble an army

army of twenty-eight thousand men, and with these he landed safely at Calais.

In the meantime the dauphin, a prince of great prudence and activity, omitted no opportunity of repairing his ruined situation, and to take the advantage of Henry's absence from France. He prevailed upon the regent of Scotland to send him a body of eight thousand men from that kingdom ; and with these, and some few forces of his own, he attacked the duke of Clarence, who commanded the troops in Henry's absence, and gained a complete victory.

This was the first action which turned the tide of success against the English. But it was of short duration, for Henry soon after appearing with a considerable army, the dauphin fled at his approach ; while many of the places, which held out for the dauphin in the neighbourhood of Paris, surrendered to the conqueror. In this manner, while Henry was every where victorious, he fixed his residence at Paris ; and while Charles had but a small court, he was attended with a very magnificent one. On Whitsunday the two kings and their two queens with crowns on their heads, dined together in public ; Charles receiving

A.D. 1421.

ceiving apparent homage, but Henry commanding with absolute authority.

In the mean time, the Dauphin was chased beyond the Loire, and almost totally dispossessed of all the northern provinces. He was even pursued into the south, by the united arms of the English and Burgundians, and threatened with total destruction. In this exigence, he found it necessary to spin out the war, and to evade all hazardous actions with a rival who had been long accustomed to victory. His prudence was every where remarkable; and, after a train of long persecutions from fortune, he found her at length willing to declare in his favour, by ridding him of an antagonist that was likely to become a master.

Henry, at a time when his glory had nearly reached its summit, and both crowns were just devolved upon him, was seized with a fistula; a disorder which, from the unskillfulness of the physicians of the times, soon became mortal. Perceiving his distemper incurable, and that his end was approaching, he sent for his brother the duke of Bedford, the earl of Warwick, and a few other noblemen, whom he had honoured with his confidence; and to them he delivered, in great tranquillity, his last will with regard to the government of his kingdom

and family. He recommended his son to their protection ; and though he regretted the being unable to accomplish the great object of his ambition, in totally subduing France, yet he expressed great indifference at the approach of death ; he devoutly waited its arrival, and expired with the same intrepidity with which he had lived, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the tenth year of his reign.

This prince possessed many virtues, but his military successes gave him credit for more than he really possessed. It is certain, however, that he had the talent of attaching his friends by affability, and of gaining his enemies by address and clemency. Yet his reign was rather splendid than profitable ; the treasures of the nation were lavished on conquests, that even though they could have been maintained, would have proved injurious to the nation. Nevertheless he died fortunate, by falling in the midst of his triumphs, and leaving his subjects in the very height of his reputation. Charles, who died two months after him, finished a wretched reign, long past in frenzy and contempt, despised by his friends, insulted by his allies, and leaving the most miserable subjects upon earth.

Henry

Henry left by his queen, Catharine of France, only one son not full nine months old, who succeeded him on the throne; and whose misfortunes, during the course of a long reign, surpassed all the glories and successes of his father.

The English triumphs, at this time, in France, produced scarce any good effects at home; as they grew warlike, they became savage, and, panting after foreign possessions, forgot the arts of cultivating those that lay nearer home. Our language, instead of improving, was more neglected than before; Langland and Chaucer had begun to polish it, and enrich it with new and elegant constructions; but it now was seen to relapse into its former rudeness, and no poet or historian of note was born in this tempestuous period.



C H A P. XVIII.

H E N R Y VI.

HE NRY VI. successor to Henry V. was not quite a year old when he came to the throne; and his relations began, soon after, to dispute the administration of government during his minority. The duke of Bedford, one of the most accomplished princes of the age, and equally experienced, both in the cabinet and the field, was appointed by parliament

A. D. 1422.

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protector of England, defender of the church, and first counsellor to the king. His brother, the duke of Gloucester, was fixed upon to govern in his absence, while he conducted the war in France ; and, in order to limit the power of both brothers, a council was named, without whose advice and approbation no measure of importance could be carried into execution.

Things being adjusted in this manner, as the conduct of military operations was at that time considered in a much superior light to civil employments at home, the duke of Bedford fixed his station in France, to prosecute the successes of the English in that part of their dominions, and to repress the attempts of Charles VII. who succeeded his father to a nominal throne. Nothing could be more deplorable than the situation of that monarch on assuming his title to the crown. The English were masters of almost all France ; and Henry VI. though yet but an infant, was solemnly invested with regal power by legates from Paris. The duke of Bedford was at the head of a numerous army, in the heart of the kingdom, ready to oppose every insurrection ; while the duke of Burgundy, who had entered into a firm confederacy with him, still remained steadfast, and seconded his claims. Yet, notwith-

withstanding these unfavourable appearances, Charles (who though yet but twenty, united the prudence of age with the affability of youth) found means to break the leagues formed against him, and to bring back his subjects to their natural interests and their duty.

However, his first attempts were totally destitute of success ; wherever he endeavoured to face the enemy he was overthrown, and he could scarcely rely on the friends next his person. His authority was insulted even by his own servants ; advantage after advantage was gained against him, and a battle fought near Verneuil, in which he was totally defeated by the duke of Bedford, seemed to render his affairs wholly desperate. However, from the impossibility of the English keeping the field without new supplies, Bedford was obliged to retire into England, and in the mean time his vigilant enemy began to recover from his late consternation. Dumois, one of his generals, at the head of a thousand men, compelled the earl of Warwick to raise the siege of Montargis ; and this advantage, slight as it was, began to make the French suppose that the English were not invincible.

But

But they soon had still greater reason to triumph in their change of fortune, and a new revolution was produced by means apparently the most unlikely to be attended with success. The assistance of a female of the humblest birth, and meanest education, served to turn the tide of victory in their favour; and impress their enemies with those terrors, which had hitherto rendered them unequal in the field. By this feeble aid, the vanquished became the victors; and the English, every where worsted, were at length totally expelled the kingdom.

In the village of Domremi, near Vaucouleurs, on the borders of Lorrain, there lived a country girl, about twenty-seven years of age, called Joan of Arc. This girl had been a servant at a small inn; and in that humble station had submitted to those hardy employments which fit the body for the fatigues of war. She was of an irreproachable life, and had hitherto testified none of those enterprizing qualities which displayed themselves soon after. She contentedly fulfilled the duties of her situation, and was remarkable only for her modesty, and love of religion. But the miseries of her country seemed to have been one of the greatest objects of her compassion and regard. Her king expelled his native throne, her country

laid in blood, and strangers executing unnumbered rapines before her eyes, were sufficient to excite her resentment, and to warm her heart with a desire of redress. Her mind inflamed by these objects, and brooding with melancholy steadfastness upon them, began to feel several impulses, which she was willing to mistake for the inspirations of heaven. Convinced of the reality of her own admonitions, she had recourse to one Baudricourt, governor of Vaucouleurs, and informed him of her destination by heaven, to free her native country from its fierce invaders. Baudricourt treated her at first with some neglect; but her importunities at length prevailed; and, willing to make a trial of her pretensions, he gave her some attendants, who conducted her to the French court, which at that time resided at Chinon.

The French court were probably sensible of the weakness of her pretensions; but they were willing to make use of every artifice to support their declining fortunes. It was therefore given out, that Joan was actually inspired; that she was able to discover the king among the number of his courtiers, although he had laid aside all the distinctions of his authority; that she had told him such secrets, which were only known

to

to himself; and that she had demanded, and minutely described, a sword in the church of St. Catharine de Fierbois, which she had never seen. In this manner, the minds of the vulgar being prepared for her appearance, she was armed cap-à-pee, mounted on a charger, and shewn in that martial dress to the people. She was then brought before the doctors of the university; and they, tinctured with the credulity of the times, or willing to second the imposture, declared that she had actually received her commission from above.

When the preparations for her mission were completely blazoned, their next aim was to send her against the enemy. The English were at that time besieging the city of Orleans, the last resource of Charles, and every thing promised them a speedy surrender. Joan undertook to raise the siege; and to render herself still more remarkable, girded herself with the miraculous sword, of which she had before such extraordinary notices. Thus equipped, she ordered all the soldiers to confess themselves before they set out; she displayed in her hand a consecrated banner, and assured the troops of certain success. Such confidence on her side soon raised the spirits of the French army; and even the English, who pretended

to

to despise her efforts, felt themselves secretly influenced with the terrors of her mission. A supply of provisions was to be conveyed into the town; Joan, at the head of some French troops, covered the embarkation, and entered Orleans at the head of the convoy, which she had safely protected. While she was leading her troops along, a dead silence and astonishment reigned among the English; and they regarded with religious awe that temerity, which they thought nothing but supernatural assistance could inspire. But they were soon rouzed from their state of amazement by a sally from the town; Joan led on the besieged, bearing the sacred standard in her hand, encouraging them with her words and actions, bringing them up to the trenches, and overpowering the besiegers in their own redoubts. In the attack of one of the forts, she was wounded in the neck with an arrow; but instantly pulling out the weapon with her own hands, and getting the wound quickly dressed, she hastened back to head the troops, and to plant her victorious banner on the ramparts of the enemy. These successes continuing, the English found that it was impossible to resist troops animated by such superior energy; and Suffolk, who conducted the attack, thinking that it might

might prove extremely dangerous to remain any longer in the presence of such a courageous and victorious enemy, raised the siege, and retreated with all imaginable precaution.

From being attacked, the French now in turn became the aggressors. Charles formed a body of six thousand men, and sent them to besiege Jergeau, whither the English, commanded by the earl of Suffolk, had retired, with a detachment of his army. The city was taken ; Suffolk yielded himself a prisoner ; and Joan marched into the place in triumph, at the head of the army. A battle was soon after fought near Patay, where the English were worsted as before ; and the generals, Scales and Talbot, were taken prisoners.

The raising of the siege of Orleans was one part of the Maid's promise to the king of France ; the crowning him at Rheims was the other. She now declared, that it was time to complete that ceremony ; and Charles, in pursuance of her advice, set out for Rheims, at the head of twelve thousand men. The towns through which he passed, opened their gates to receive him ; and Rheims sent him a deputation, with its keys, upon his approach. The ceremony of his coronation was there performed with the utmost solemnity ; and the

maid of Orleans (for so she was now called) seeing the completion of her mission, desired leave to retire, alledging, that she had now accomplished the end of her calling. But her services had been so great, that the king could not think of parting; he pressed her to stay so earnestly, that she at length complied with his request.

A tide of successes followed the performance of this solemnity; Laon, Soissons, Chateau-Thierri, Provins, and many other towns and fortresses in that neighbourhood, submitted to him on the first summons. On the other hand, the English, discomfited and dispirited, fled on every quarter, unknowing whether to ascribe their misfortunes to the power of force-ry, or to a celestial influence; but equally terrified at either. They now found themselves deprived of the conquests they had gained, in the same manner as the French had formerly submitted to their power. Their own divisions, both abroad and at home, unfitted them entirely for carrying on the war; and the duke of Bedford, notwithstanding all his prudence, saw himself divested of his strong holds in the country, without being able to stop the enemies progress. In order, therefore, to revive the declining state of his affairs, he resolved to have

have Henry crowned king at Paris, knowing that the natives would be allured to obedience by the splendour of the ceremony. Henry was accordingly crowned, all the vassals that still continued under the English power swearing fealty and homage. But it was now too late for the ceremonies of a coronation to give a turn to the affairs of the English; the generality of the kingdom had declared against them; and the remainder only waited a convenient opportunity to follow the example.

An accident ensued soon after, which, though it promised to promote the English cause in France, in the end served to render it odious, and conduced to the total evacuation of that country. The duke of Burgundy, at the head of a powerful army, had laid siege to Compeign; and the Maid of Orleans had thrown herself into the place, contrary to the wishes of the governor, who did not desire the company of one whose authority would be greater than his own. The garrison, however, were rejoiced at her appearance, and believed themselves invincible under her protection. But their joy was of short duration; for Joan having, the day after her arrival, headed a sally, and twice driven the enemy from their intrenchments, she was at last obliged to retire,

tire, placing herself in the rear, to protect the retreat of her forces. But in the end, attempting to follow her troops into the city, she found the gates shut, and the bridge drawn up by order of the governor, who is said to have long wished an opportunity of delivering her up to the enemy.

Nothing could exceed the joy of the besiegers, in having taken a person who had been so long a terror to their arms. The service of Te Deum was publicly celebrated on this occasion; and it was hoped that the capture of this extraordinary person would restore the English to their former victories and successes. The duke of Bedford was no sooner informed of her being taken, than he purchased her of the count Vendome who had made her his prisoner, and ordered her to be committed to close confinement. The credulity of both nations was at that time so great, that nothing was too absurd to gain belief, that coincided with their passions. As Joan but a little before, from her successes, was regarded as a saint, she was now, upon her captivity, considered as a sorceress, forsaken by the dæmon who had granted her a fallacious and temporary assistance. Accordingly it was resolved in council to send her to

Rouen

Rouen to be tried for witchcraft ; and the bishop of Beauvais, a man wholly devoted to the English interest, presented a petition against her for that purpose. The university of Paris was so mean as to join in the same request. Several prelates, among whom the cardinal of Winchester was the only Englishman, were appointed as her judges. They held their court in Rouen, where Henry then resided ; and the Maid, cloathed in her formerly military apparel, but loaded with irons, was produced before this tribunal. Her behaviour there no way disgraced her former gallantry ; she betrayed neither weakness, nor womanish submission ; but appealed to God and the pope for the truth of her former revelations. In the issue, she was found guilty of heresy and witchcraft, and sentenced to be burnt alive, the common punishment for such offences.

But previous to the infliction of this dreadful sentence upon her, they were resolved to make her abjure her former errors ; and at length so far prevailed upon her, by terror and rigorous treatment, that her spirits were entirely broken, by the hardships she was obliged to suffer. Her former visionary dreams began to vanish, and a gloomy distrust to take place of her late inspirations. She publicly declared

herself

herself willing to recant, and promised never more to give way to the vain delusions which had hitherto misled her, and imposed on the people. This was what her oppressors desired; and willing to shew some appearance of mercy, they changed her sentence into perpetual imprisonment, and to be fed during life on bread and water. But the rage of her enemies was not yet satiated. Perfectly satisfied of her guilt, they were willing to know if her reformation was equally certain. Suspecting that the female dress, which she had consented to wear, was disagreeable to her, they purposely placed in her apartment a suit of men's apparel, and watched for the effect of their temptation upon her. Their cruel artifices prevailed. Joan, struck with the sight of a dress in which she had gained so much glory, immediately threw off her penitent's robes, and put on the forbidden garment. Her enemies caught her equipped in this manner; and her imprudence was considered as a relapse into her former transgressions. No recantation would suffice, and no pardon would be granted to her. She was condemned to be burnt alive in the market-place of Rouen; and this infamous sentence was accordingly executed upon her.

Super-

Superstition adds virulence to the natural cruelty of mankind ; and this cruel sentence served only to inflame the hatred between the contending powers, without mending the cause of the invaders. One of the first misfortunes which the English felt after this punishment, was the defection of the duke of Burgundy, who had for some time seen the error of his conduct, and wished to break an unnatural connection, that only served to involve his country in ruin. A treaty was therefore begun, and concluded, between him and Charles, in which the latter made all the atonements possible for his offence ; and the former agreed to assist him in driving the English out of France. This was a mortal blow to their cause ; and such was its effects upon the populace in London, when they were informed of it, that they killed several of the duke of Burgundy's subjects, who happened to be among them at that time. It might perhaps also have hastened the duke of Bedford's death, who died at Rouen a few days after the treaty was concluded ; and the earl of Cambridge was appointed his successor to the regency of France.

From this period, the English affairs became totally irretrievable. The city of Paris

returned once more to the sense of its duty. Lord Willoughby, who commanded it for the English, was contented to stipulate for the safe retreat of his troops to Normandy. Thus ground was continually, though slowly, gained by the French; and notwithstanding their fields were laid waste, and their towns depopulated, yet they found protection from the weakness and divisions of the English. At length, both parties began to grow weary of a war, which, though carried on but feebly, was yet a burthen greater than either could support. But the terms of peace insisted upon by both were so wide of each other, that no hopes of an accommodation could quickly be expected. A truce therefore for twenty-two months was concluded, which left every thing on the present footing between the parties.

A.D. 1443. No sooner was this agreed upon, than Charles employed himself with great industry and judgement in repairing those numberless ills, to which his kingdom, from the continuance of wars, both foreign and domestic, had so long been exposed. He established discipline among his troops, and justice among his governors. He revived agriculture, and repressed faction. Thus being prepared once more for taking the field, he took the first favourable occasion

occasion of breaking the truce ; and Normandy was at the same time invaded by four powerful armies ; one commanded by Charles himself, a second by the duke of Brittany, a third by the duke of Alençon, and a fourth by the count Dunois. Every place opened their gates almost as soon as the French appeared before them. Rouen was the only town that promised to hold out a siege ; but the inhabitants clamoured so loud for a surrender, that the duke of Somerset, who commanded the garrison, was obliged to capitulate. The battle, or rather the skirmish, of Fourmings, was the last stand which the English made in defence of their French dominions. However, they were put to the rout, and above a thousand were slain. All Normandy and Guienne, that had so long acknowledged subjection to England, were lost in the space of a year ; and the English at length saw themselves entirely dispossessed of a country, which for above three centuries they had considered as annexed to their native dominions. Calais alone remained of all their conquests ; and this was but a small compensation for the blood and treasure which had been lavished in that country, and only served to gratify ambition with a transient applause.

It may easily be supposed, that the bad successes in France, which began almost with young Henry's reign, produced dissensions and factions among the rulers at home. The duke of Gloucester, who had been appointed regent of England during his brother's absence, was not so secure in his place, but that he had many who envied his situation. Among the number of these was Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, great uncle to the king, and the legitimate son of John of Gaunt. This prelate, to whom the care of the king's person and education had been entrusted, was a man of great capacity and experience, but of an intriguing and dangerous disposition. As he aspired to the government of affairs, he had continual disputes with the duke of Gloucester, and gained frequent advantages over the open temper of that prince. It was in vain that the duke of Bedford employed all his own authority, and that of parliament, to reconcile them; their mutual animosities served for several years to embarrass government, and to give its enemies every advantage. The sentiments of these two leaders of their party were particularly divided with regard to France. The cardinal encouraged every proposal of accommodation with that country;

country ; the duke of Gloucester was for maintaining the honour of the English arms, and winning back all that had been lost by defeats or delay. In this contest, the powers seemed nearly divided ; and it became incumbent on one side to call in new auxiliaries, before either party could turn the political scale. For this purpose, the cardinal was resolved to strengthen himself, by procuring a suitable match for Henry, who was now twenty-three years old ; and then, by bringing the new-made queen over to his interests to turn the balance in his favour. Accordingly, the earl of Suffolk, a nobleman whom he knew to be stedfast in his attachments, was sent over to France, apparently to settle the terms of the truce, which had been then begun ; but, in reality, to procure a suitable match for the king. The duke of Gloucester had before proposed a daughter of the count Armagnac, but had not influence sufficient to prevail. The cardinal and his friends had cast their eye on Margaret of Anjou, daughter of Regnier, titular king of Sicily, Naples, and Jerusalem ; but without either real power or possessions. This princess was considered as the most accomplished of the age, both in mind and person ; and it was thought would, by her own

abilities, be able to supply the defects of her consort, who already appeared weak, timid, and superstitious. The treaty was therefore hastened on by Suffolk, and the marriage soon after ratified in England.

The cardinal now strengthened by this new alliance (for the queen came immediately into his measures), the duke of Gloucester soon found himself possessed of only the shadow of power without the substance ; all his measures were over-ruled by his powerful antagonist ; and he daily found himself insulted in the most cruel manner. One of the principal steps his enemies took to render him odious, was to accuse his wife, the duchess, of witchcraft. She was charged with conversing with one Roger Bolingbroke, a priest, and reputed necromancer ; and also one Mary Gurdemain, who was said to be a witch. It is asserted that that these three in conjunction had made a figure of the king in wax, which was placed before a gentle fire ; and as the wax dissolved, the king's strength was expected to waste ; and upon its total dissolution his life was to be at an end. This accusation was readily attended to in that credulous age ; and the more it departed from reason, the fitter it was for becoming an object of belief. The prisoners
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were pronounced guilty; neither the rank of the duchess, nor the innocence of the accused could protect them; she was condemned to do penance, and to suffer perpetual imprisonment; Bolingbroke, the priest, was hanged, and the woman was burnt in Smithfield.

But this was only the beginning of the duke's distresses. The cardinal of Winchester was resolved to drive his resentment to the utmost extreme; and accordingly procured a parliament to be summoned, not at London, which was too well affected to the duke, but at St. Edmundsbury, where his adherents were sufficiently numerous to over-awe every opponent. As soon as he appeared, he was accused of treason, and thrown into prison; and on the day on which he was to make his defence, he was found dead in his bed, though without any signs of violence upon his body.

The death of the duke of Gloucester was universally ascribed to the cardinal of Winchester, who himself died six weeks after, testifying the utmost remorse for the bloody scene he had acted. What share the queen had in the guilt of this transaction is uncertain; her usual activity and spirit made the public conclude, with some reason, that the duke's en-

mies durst not have ventured on such a deed without her privity. Henry did not fail to share in the general disgust that was thus produced ; and as he wanted abilities, he never had the art to remove any suspicion. From this time discontent began to prevail among the people, and faction among the great. A weak prince seated on the throne of England, however gentle and innocent, seldom fails of having his authority despised, and his power insulted. The incapacity of Henry began every day to appear in a fuller light ; and the foreign war being now extinguished, the people began to prepare for the horrors of intestine strife. In this period of calamity, a new interest was revived, which had lain dormant in the times of prosperity and triumph.

It was now that the English were to pay the severe, though late, penalty for having unjustly deposed Richard the Second ; another Richard, who was duke of York, beginning to think of preferring his claims to the crown. This nobleman was descended, by the mother's side, from Lionel, one of the sons of Edward the Third, whereas the reigning king was descended from John of Gaunt, a son of the same monarch, but younger than Lionel. Richard, therefore stood plainly in succession before

before

before Henry ; and he began to think the weakness and unpopularity of the present reign a favourable moment for ambition. The ensign of Richard was a white rose, that of Henry a red ; and this gave name to the two factions, whose animosity was now about to drench the kingdom with blood.

The cardinal of Winchester being dead, the duke of Suffolk, who had a hand in Gloucester's assassination, took the lead in public affairs ; and being secretly aided by the interest of the queen, managed all with uncontrollable authority. As this nobleman had made his way to power by murder, so he was resolved to maintain himself in it by the usual resources of bad men, by tyranny over his inferiors, and flattery to the queen. His conduct soon excited the jealousy or the hatred of the whole kingdom. The great nobility could ill brook the exaltation of a subject above them, who was of a birth inferior to their own. The people complained of his arbitrary measures ; and the immense acquisitions which he had made in office, and the blame of every odious and unsuccessful measure was instantly given to him. Suffolk was not ignorant of the hatred of the people ; but supposed that his crimes were such as could not be proved against him,

A. D. 1450.

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or that, if proved, he could readily evade punishment ; he endeavoured therefore to overawe his enemies by boldly presenting himself to the charge ; and he called upon them to shew an instance of his guilt. This was what the House of Commons had long wished for ; and they immediately opened their charge against him of corruption, tyranny, and treason. He was accused of being the cause of the loss of France ; of persuading the French king, with an armed force, to invade England ; and of betraying in office the secrets of his department. This accusation might have been false ; but the real motive, which was Suffolk's power, and the cruel use he made of it, was left unmentioned, although it was true. It was no easy matter for any one man's strength, how great soever, to withstand the united resentment of a nation : so that the court was obliged to give up its favourite ; and the king, to shield him as much as possible from popular resentment, banished him the kingdom for five years. This was considered by some as an escape from justice ; the captain of a vessel was therefore employed by his enemies to intercept him in his passage to France ; he was seized near Dover, his head was struck off on the side of a long boat, and his body thrown into the sea.

There is little in the transactions of these times to interest us on the side of either party; we see scarce any thing but crimes on both sides, without one shining character, or one virtue to animate the narrative.

By the death of the duke of Suffolk, Richard of York saw himself rid of a potent enemy, and was pleased to see the discontents of the nation daily increase. Among the number of complaints which the unpopularity of the government gave rise to, there was some which even excited insurrection; particularly that headed by John Cade, which was of the most dangerous nature. This man was a native of Ireland, who had been obliged to fly over into France for his crimes; but seeing the people upon his return prepared for violent measures, he assumed the name of Mortimer; and at the head of twenty thousand Kentish men advanced toward the capital, and encamped at Blackheath. The king being informed of this commotion, sent a message to demand the cause of their assembling in arms; and Cade, in the name of the community, answered, that their only aim was to punish evil ministers, and procure a redress of grievances for the people. The king's council deeming these demands seditious, a body of fifteen thou-

thousand men were levied to oppose the insurgents ; while Henry himself marched at their head towards Blackheath. At his approach, Cade retired, as if he had been afraid of an engagement, and lay in ambush in a wood, not doubting that he should be pursued by the king's whole army ; but the king was content with sending a detachment after the fugitives, and returning himself to London. This was what Cade desired to see, and sallying out from his ambuscade, he cut the detachment in pieces.

The citizens of London soon after opened their gates to the victor ; and Cade for some time maintained great order and discipline among his followers. He always led them out into the field during the night-time ; and published severe edicts against plunder, and violence of every kind.

Next day, being informed that the treasurer, lord Say, was in the city, he caused him to be apprehended, and beheaded without any form of trial ; and in the evening returned to the Borough of Southwark. Thus for some days he continued the practice of entering the city in the morning, and quitting it at night ; but at length being unable to keep his followers within bounds, the citizens resolved to shut

their gates against him. Cade endeavouring to force his way, an engagement ensued between him and the citizens, which lasted all day, and was not discontinued until night put an end to the engagement. The archbishop of Canterbury, and the chancellor, who had taken refuge in the Tower, being informed of the situation of affairs, found means to draw up the same night an act of amnesty, which was privately dispersed among the rebels. This had the desired effect. Cade saw himself in the morning abandoned by most of his followers, and, retreating to Rochester, was obliged to fly alone into the Wolds of Kent, where a price being set upon his head by proclamation, he was discovered, and slain by one Alexander Eden, who, in recompence for this service, was made governor of Dover-castle.

In the mean time, the duke of York secretly fomented these disturbances; and, pretending to espouse the cause of the people, wrote to the king, advising a reformation in the ministry; and the House of Commons was brought over, to second his request. An address was presented against the duke of Somerset, the duchess of Suffolk, the bishop of Chester, sir John Tufton, and lord Dudley, praying the king
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to remove them for ever from his person and councils, and to prohibit them from approaching within twelve miles of the court. Though the king was willing enough to oppose so violent and arbitrary an attack upon his favourites, yet he endeavoured to soften the general animosity against them, by promising to banish a part of the obnoxious ministry from court for the space of a year.

But partial concessions in government are generally bad palliatives. The duke of York, who found the people entirely attached to him, resolved to avail himself of his power ; and raising a body of ten thousand men, marched towards London, demanded a reformation of the government, and the removal of the duke of Somerset from all his power and authority. He had hopes from the beginning that the citizens would have thrown open the gates to him ; but was much mortified, when he found that he was refused admission. Upon his retreat into Kent, a parley ensued between the king and him, in which the duke still insisted on the dismissal of Somerset, with which the king seemed at length willing to comply. The duke of York was therefore persuaded to pay his respects to the king in his tent ; but on repeating his charge against the duke of Somerset,

he was surprised to see that minister step from behind the curtain, and offer to justify his innocence. York now perceived his danger, and repressed the impetuosity of his accusation. As soon as he left the presence, the king commanded him to be apprehended ; but such was this nobleman's authority, or such the timidity of the king's council, that they suffered him to retire to his seat at Wigmore, upon promising strict obedience for the future.

But a reconciliation thus extorted could be of no long duration ; York still secretly aspired to the crown, and though he wished nothing so ardently, yet he was for sometime prevented by his own scruples from seizing it. What his intrigues failed to bring about, accident produced to his desire. The king falling into a distemper, which so far increased natural imbecility, that it even rendered him incapable of maintaining the appearance of royalty. York was appointed lieutenant and protector of the kingdom, with powers to hold and open parliaments at pleasure. This was a fatal blow to the house of Lancaster ; all the adherents of that party were dismissed from court, and the duke of Somerset was sent to the Tower.

York

A. D. 1454. York being thus invested with a plentitude of power, continued in the enjoyment of it for some time; but at length the unhappy king recovering from his lethargic complaint; and, as if awaking from a dream, perceived with surprize, that he was stripped of all his authority. Margaret, his queen, also did all in her power to rouse him to a sense of his unworthy situation, and prevailed upon him to depose the duke of York from his power; in consequence of which, that nobleman had instant recourse to arms. The impotent monarch, thus obliged to take the field, was dragged after his army to St. Alban's, where both sides came to an engagement, in which the Yorkists gained a complete victory, and the duke of Somerset was slain. The king himself being wounded, and taking shelter in a cottage, near the field of battle, was taken prisoner, and treated by the victor with great respect and tenderness. From thence he was, shortly after, led along in triumph to London; and the duke of York permitting him still to enjoy the name of king, he reserved to himself the title of protector, in which consisted all the real power of the crown.

Henry was now but a prisoner, treated with the splendid forms of royalty; yet indolent and fickle, he seemed pleased with his situation,

tion, and did not regret that power which was not to be exercised without fatigue. But it was otherwise with Margaret, his queen. She, naturally bold, active, and endued with masculine courage, could not be content with the appearance of that authority, which her enemies alone permitted her to exercise ; she continued to excite the wretched monarch to a vindication of his real dignity, and to spur him on to independence. He was, therefore, once more induced to assert his prerogative ; and the duke of York was obliged to retire, to be in readiness to oppose any designs against his liberty and life. At first a negociation for peace was entered upon by both parties ; but their mutual distrusts soon brought them into the field, and the fate of the kingdom was given up to be determined by the sword. Their armies met at Bloreheath, on the borders of Staffordshire, and the Yorkists gained some advantages. But when a more general action was about to ensue, the night before the intended engagement, Sir Andrew Trollop, who commanded a body of veterans for the duke of York, deserted with all his men to the king ; and this so intimidated the whole army of the Yorkists, that they separated the next day, without striking a single blow. The duke of

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York

York fled to Ireland; the earl of Warwick, one of his boldest and ablest supporters, escaped to Calais, with the government of which he had been entrusted during the late protectorship; and all the party, thus suppressed, concealed their intentions for a more favourable opportunity. Nor was this opportunity long wanting; Warwick having met with some successes at sea, landed in Kent, and being there joined by some other barons, he marched up to London, amidst the acclamations of the people. The city immediately opened its gates to him; and his troops increasing on every day's march, he soon found himself in a condition to face the royal army, which hastened from Coventry to attack him. Never was there a more formidable division of interests, or greater inveteracy between the chiefs of either party than the present. Warwick was one of the most celebrated generals of his age, formed for times of trouble, extremely artful, and incontestibly brave, equally skilful in council and the field, and inspired with a degree of hatred against the queen that nothing could suppress. On the other side, the queen seemed the only acting general: she ranged the army in battalia, and gave the necessary orders, while the poor king was brought forward, an involuntary spectator
of

of those martial preparations. Both armies met on a plan near Northampton ; the queen's forces amounting to about five and twenty thousand men, the earl of Warwick's to near double that number. While the queen went about from rank to rank, the king remained in his tent, awaiting the issue of the combat with female doubts and apprehensions. The battle continued for five hours, with the utmost obstinacy ; but at length the good fortune and the numbers of Warwick were seen to prevail. The queen's army was overthrown ; and she had the misfortune to see the king once more made a prisoner, and brought back to his capital in triumph.

The cause of the Yorkists being thus confirmed by the strongest arguments, those of power, a parliament was called to give it their more formal sanction. The duke of York, whose prospects began to widen as he rose, from being contented with the protectorship, now began to claim the crown. It was now, for the first time, that the house of lords seemed to enjoy an unbiased deliberative authority ; the cause of Henry and the duke of York was solemnly debated, each side producing their reasons without fear or control. This was the first time that a spirit of true rational liberty

ever appeared to exert itself in England, and in which recent conquest did not supersede all deliberation. The duke of York, though a conqueror, could not entirely gain his cause : it was determined that Henry should possess the throne during his life ; and that the duke of York should be appointed his successor, to the utter exclusion of the prince of Wales, who, yet but a child, was insensible of the injury that was done him.

The queen, to all appearance, now seemed utterly destitute of every resource ; her armies were routed, her husband taken prisoner, and the parliament disclaimed her cause ; yet, though she had lost all, she still retained her native intrepidity and perseverance. She was a woman of a great mind and some faults, but ambition seemed to be the leading passion in all her conduct. Being now a fugitive, distant from the capital, opposed by a victorious army, and a consummate general, she still tried every resource to repair her disastrous circumstances. She flew to Wales ; there endeavoured to animate her old friends, and to acquire new. The nobility of the North, who regarded themselves as the most warlike of the kingdom, were moved by indignation to find the southern barons dispose of the crown, and settle the government.

ment. They began to consider the royal cause as unjustly oppressed; and the queen soon found herself at the head of an army of twenty thousand men, ready to second her pretensions. She and her old enemy, the duke of York, once more met upon Wakefield Green, near the castle of Sandel; and victory, on this occasion, declared itself in favour of the queen. The duke of York was killed in the action; and as his body was found among the slain, his head was cut off by Margaret's orders, and fixed on the gates of York, with a paper crown, in derision of his pretended title. His son, the earl of Rutland, a youth of seventeen, was taken prisoner and killed in cold blood, by lord Clifford, in revenge for his father's death, who had fallen in the battle of St. Alban's.

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Margaret, being victorious, marched towards London in order to give the king liberty; but the earl of Warwick, who now put himself at the head of the Yorkists, commanded an army, in which he led about the captive king to give a sanction to his attempts. Upon the approach of the Lancastrians he conducted his forces, strengthened by a body of Londoners, who were very affectionate to his cause, and he gave battle to the queen at St. Alban's. While the armies were

warmly engaged, lord Lovelace, who commanded a considerable body of Yorkists treacherously withdrew from the combat, and this decided the victory in favour of the queen. Above two thousand of the Yorkists perished in the battle, and the person of the king again fell into the hands of his own party; to be treated with apparent respect, but real contempt. Lord Bonville, to whose care he had been entrusted, staid with him after the defeat, upon an assurance of pardon; but Margaret, regardless of her husband's promise, immediately ordered his head to be struck off.

It only now remained, that the city of London should declare in the queen's favour, but Warwick had previously secured it in his interests; and the citizens, who dreaded her tumultuous army, refused to open their gates to her summons. In the mean time, young Edward, the eldest son of the late duke of York, began to repair the losses his party had lately sustained, and to give spirit to the Yorkists. This prince, in the bloom of youth, remarkable for the beauty of his person, his bravery, and popular deportment, advanced towards London with the remainder of Warwick's army, and obliging Margaret to

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retire, entered the city amidst the acclamations of the people. Perceiving his own popularity, he supposed that now was the time to lay his claim to the crown; and his friend Warwick, assembling the citizens in St. John's Fields, pronounced an harrangue, setting forth the title of Edward, and inveighing against the tyranny and usurpation of the house of Lancaster. He then demanded whether they chose Henry for their king; to which the people crying, a York! a York! he quickly called an assembly of lords and bishops, at Baynard's Castle, and these ratified their choice. The young duke was proclaimed king, by the title of Edward IV. and then conducted with great ceremony to the palace, where Henry used to lodge when within the walls of the city.

But the miseries of a civil war were not yet completed, and Margaret was resolved to strike another blow. Upon her retiring to the North, great numbers flocked to her standard, and she was able, in a few days, to assemble an army of sixty thousand men in Yorkshire. On the other side, the earl of Warwick conducted young Edward at the head of forty thousand men to oppose her. Both sides at length met near Towton, in the county of York, to decide the fate of empire, and never was England

depopulated by so terrible an engagement. It was a dreadful fight, to behold a hundred thousand men of the same country engaged against each other ; and all to satisfy the empty ambition of the weakest, or the worst of mankind. While the army of Edward was advancing to the charge, there happened a great fall of snow ; which driving full in the faces of the enemy, blinded them, and this advantage, seconded by an impetuous onset, decided the victory in their favour. Edward issued orders to give no quarter ; and a bloody slaughter ensued, in which near forty thousand of the Lancastrians were slain. Edward entered York victorious ; and taking down the heads of his father and the earl of Salisbury, that were placed over the city gates, put up that of the earl of Devonshire in their stead.

In the mean time, Margaret hearing the fate of her army, and being sensible that no place in England could now afford her protection, she fled with Henry and her son to Scotland. But no calamity was able to repress her perseverance ; though so often overcome, yet she was resolved once more to enter England with five thousand men, granted her by the French king ; and the unfortunate Henry was led onward, by his presence to enforce

force her claims. But even here her former ill fortune attended her ; and her little fleet was dispersed by a tempest, while she herself escaped, with some difficulty, by entering the mouth of the Tweed. Soon after a defeat, which her few forces suffered at Hexham, seemed to render her cause desperate ; and the cruelty which was practised upon all her adherents, rendered it still more dangerous.

The loss of this battle appeared to deprive her of every resource ; she and her husband were obliged to seek for safety in a separate flight, without attendants, and without even the necessaries of life. The weak unfortunate king, always imprudent, and always unsuccessful, thought he could remain concealed in England ; but his error was soon attended with the obvious consequences, being taken prisoner, carried to London with ignominy, and confined in the Tower. Margaret was rather more fortunate. She flying with her son into a forest, where she endeavoured to conceal herself, was set upon during the darkness of the night by robbers, who, either ignorant or regardless of her quality, despoiled her of her rings and jewels, and treated her with the utmost indignity. But she found more respectful treatment from one of those lawless men,
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who, knowing her station, resolved to procure her safety at the hazard of his own ; and at last conducted her to the sea-coast, whence she made her escape to her father in Flanders, who, though very poor, strove as well as he could to supply her with the necessaries of life. To the same court the dukes of Somerset and Exeter retired ; and they, literally speaking, felt all the miseries of want. Philip de Comines, the French historian, says he saw the duke of Exeter following the duke of Burgundy's equipage bare-footed, and serving for his livelihood as a footman. This was a strange situation for a lord, who had conducted armies, and was allied to kings and princes ; but those enjoyments which served to distinguish the great from the little, were not so apparent then as at present.

A.D. 1464. Edward being now, by means of the earl of Warwick, fixed upon the throne, reigned in peace and security, while his title was recognized by parliament, and universally submitted to by the people. He, began therefore, to give a loose to his favourite passions ; and a spirit of gallantry, mixed with cruelty, was seen to prevail in his court. In the very same palace, which one day exhibited a spectacle of horror, was to be seen the day following a mask

mask or a pageant ; and the king would at once gallant a mistress, and inspect an execution. In order to turn him from these pursuits, which were calculated to render him unpopular, the earl of Warwick advised him to marry ; and, with his consent, went over to France to procure Bona of Savoy as queen, and the match was accordingly concluded. But whilst the earl was hastening the negociation in France, the king himself rendered it abortive at home, by marrying Elizabeth Woodville, with whom he had fallen in love, and whom he had vainly endeavoured to debauch. Having thus given Warwick real cause of offence, he was resolved to widen the breach, by driving him from the council. Every incident tended to increase the jealousy between the king, and this powerful subject ; the favour shewn the queen's party, and the contempt which was thrown upon the earl, manifested an open rupture. Warwick, whose prudence was equal to his bravery, soon made use of both to assist his revenge ; he seduced the duke of Clarence, brother to the king ; and to confirm that nobleman in his interest, he gave him his daughter in marriage. Thus an extensive and dangerous combination was formed against Edward and his ministry ; and an accident that followed soon after, contributed to
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fan the flame. The inhabitants about St. Leonard's hospital, in Yorkshire, complained that the duties levied for that institution, which were originally allotted for pious uses, were now secreted by the managers ; and they refused to contribute their part. They soon after rose in a body to oppose the ecclesiastical severities that were levelled against them by the earl of Pembroke. It is thought that the earl of Warwick had some hand in fomenting these disorders ; and although this rebellion was quieted by a pardon from Edward, yet some others, that broke out shortly after, appeared favourable to Warwick's designs. Vengeance seemed to be the only motive this nobleman had in view ; and that he pursued with unabating assiduity. Plots, treasons, stratagems, and negociations, followed each other in rapid succession ; but at last fortune seemed to favour Warwick's aims ; and the king, as we are told, fell into his power, by accepting an invitation, which the earl gave him, in order to betray him. Be this as it may, Edward had soon the good fortune to see himself at the head of a numerous army, and in a condition to take satisfaction for the treachery of his powerful opponent. Resolving therefore to take advantage of the enemies weakness,

ness, after having defeated a party commanded by lord Wells, and cut off his head, he marched to give them battle. In this exigence, Warwick, and the duke of Clarence, had no other resource but to quit the kingdom ; and embarking from Calais, they seized upon some Flemish vessels, which they found lying along that coast, with which they entered one of the ports of France. Here they entered into an union with Margaret, which was dictated by necessity ; both fides being willing to forget their mutual animosity, in order to second their revenge. Lewis, the king of France, prepared a fleet to escort them ; and seizing the oportunity, they landed at Dartmouth with a small body of troops, while Edward was in the North, suppressing an insurrection, which had lately appeared there. Nothing can be more extraordinary than the success of Warwick upon this occasion. The spirit of discontent with which many were infected, and the general instability of the English nation, conspired with his ambition ; and in less than six days such multitudes flocked to his standard, that he saw himself at the head of an army of threescore thousand men.

It was now become Edward's turn to fly the kingdom. He had just time to escape an at-

tempt made upon his person in the night, by the marquis of Montague ; and to embark on board a small fleet, which lay off Lynn in Norfolk. Nor were his dangers lessened at sea, where he was chased by some ships belonging to the Hanse-towns, who were then at war with both France and England. But at length he landed safely in Holland, where he received a cool reception from the duke of Burgundy, with whom he had some time before entered into an alliance.

A.D. 1470. In the mean time, Warwick, with his resistless army, advanced to London ; and once more the poor passive king Henry was released from prison to be placed upon a dangerous throne. A parliament was called, which confirmed Henry's title with great solemnity ; and Warwick was himself received among the people under the title of the King-maker. All the attainders of the Lancastrians were reversed ; and every one was restored, who had lost either honours or fortune by his former adherence to Henry's cause. All the considerable Yorkists either fled to the continent, or took shelter in sanctuaries, where the ecclesiastical privileges afforded them protection.

But Edward's party, though repressed, was not destroyed. Though an exile in Holland,

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he had many partizans at home ; and after an absence of nine months, being seconded by a small body of forces, granted him by the duke of Burgundy, he made a descent at Raven-spur in Yorkshire. Though at first he was coolly received by the English, yet his army increased upon its march, while his moderation and feigned humility still added to the number of his partizans. London, at that time ever ready to admit the most powerful, opened her gates to him ; and the wretched Henry was once more plucked from his throne, to be sent back to his former mansion.

Thus Warwick began to experience the instability of fortune, and find his party declining ; but what gave the most dreadful blow to his hopes was the defection of his son-in-law, the duke of Clarence, who went over to Edward, and threw all his weight into the opposite scale. Nothing now therefore remained to Warwick, but to cut short a state of anxious suspense by hazarding a battle ; and though he knew his forces to be inferior to those of Edward, yet he placed his greatest dependence upon his own generalship. With this resolution, therefore, he marched from St. Alban's, where he was stationed, and advancing towards Barnet, within ten miles of London,

don, there resolved to wait for Edward, who was not slow in marching down to oppose him. Warwick and Edward were at that time considered as the two most renowned generals of the age ; and now was to be struck the decisive blow, that was either to fix Edward on the throne, or to overthrow his pretensions for ever. The unfortunate Henry also was dragged along to be a spectator of the engagement ; happy in his natural imbecility, which seemed as a balm to sooth all his afflictions.

A. D. 1471,
Apr. 14.

The battle began early in the morning, and lasted till noon ; for never did two armies fight with greater obstinacy and bravery, not honour but life, depending on the issue of the contest. The example of Warwick inspired his troops with more than common resolution, and the victory for a while seemed to declare in his favour. But an accident at last threw the balance against him ; from the mistiness of the morning, a part of his army happening to mistake a body of their own forces for that of the enemy, fell furiously upon them, and this error turned the fortune of the day. Warwick did all that experience, valour, or conduct could suggest, to retrieve the mistake ; but it was now too late ; no art could recover the former error ; wherefore, finding all hopes

hopes gone, he was resolved to sell the conquerors a dear-bought victory. He had, contrary to his usual practice, engaged that day on foot ; and leading a chosen body of troops into the thickest of the slaughter, he there fell in the midst of his enemies, covered over with wounds. His brother underwent the same fate ; and ten thousand of his adherents were slain, Edward having ordered that no quarter would be given.

Margaret, who had been ever fruitful in resources, was at that time returning from France with her son, the prince of Wales, where she had been negotiating for fresh supplies. She had scarce time to refresh herself from the fatigues of her voyage, when she received the fatal news of the death of the brave Warwick, and the total destruction of her party. Though she had hitherto boldly withstood all the attacks of fortune, the present information was too violent a blow for nature to support. Her grief, for the first time, found way in a torrent of tears ; and yielding to her unhappy fate, she took sanctuary in the abbey of Beaulieu in Hampshire.

She had not been long in this melancholy abode before she found some few friends still willing to assist her fallen fortunes. Tudor,

earl of Pembroke, Courtney, earl of Devonshire, the lords of Wenlock and St. John, with other men of rank, exhorted her still to hope for success, and offered to assist her to the last. A dawn of hope was sufficient to revive the courage of this magnanimous woman ; and the recollection of her former misfortunes gave way to the flattering prospect of another trial. She had now fought battles in almost every province in England ; Tewksbury-park was the last scene that terminated her attempts. The duke of Somerset headed her army ; a man who had shared her dangers, and had ever been steady in her cause. He was valiant, generous, and polite ; but rash, and headstrong. When Edward first attacked him in his entrenchments, he repulsed him with such vigour, that the enemy retired with precipitation ; upon which the duke, supposing them routed, pursued, and ordered lord Wenlock to support his charge. But unfortunately this lord disobeyed his orders ; and Somerset's forces were soon overpowered by numbers. In this dreadful exigence, the duke finding that all was over, became ungovernable in his rage ; and beholding Wenlock inactive, and remaining in the very place where he had first drawn up his men, giving way to his fury, with his heavy

heavy battle-ax in both hands, he ran upon the coward, and with one blow dashed out his brains.

The queen and the prince were taken prisoners after the battle, and brought into the presence of Edward. The young prince appeared before the conqueror with undaunted majesty ; and being asked, in an insulting manner, how he dared to invade England without leave, the young prince, more mindful of his high birth than of his ruined fortune, replied, “ I have entered the dominions of my father, to revenge his injuries, and redress my own.” The barbarous Edward, enraged at his intrepidity, struck him on the mouth with his gauntlet ; and this served as a signal for farther brutality : the dukes of Gloucester, Clarence, and others, like wild beasts rushing on the unarmed youth at once, stabbed him to the heart with their daggers. To complete the tragedy, Henry himself, who had long been the passive spectator of all these horrors, was now thought unfit to live. The duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard the Third, entering his chamber alone, murdered him in cold blood. Of all those who were taken, none were suffered to survive but Margaret herself. It was perhaps expected that she would be ransomed by

the king of France ; and in this they were not deceived, as that monarch paid the king of England fifty thousand crowns for her freedom. This extraordinary woman, after having sustained the cause of her husband in twelve battles, after having survived her friends, fortunes, and children, died a few years after in privacy in France, very miserable indeed ; but with few other claims to our pity, except her courage and her distresses.

C H A P.



C H A P. XIX.
E D W A R D IV.

O F all people the English are the most truly compassionate ; and a throne raised upon cruelty never wanted enemies among them. Nothing could have been more ill-judged than any attempts to govern such a people by the hands of the executioner : and the leaders of either faction seemed insensible of this truth. Edward being now freed from great enemies,

turned to the punishment of those of lesser note ; so that the gibbets were hung with his adversaries, and their estates confiscated to his use. The bastard Falconbridge, among others, having advanced to London at the head of a small body of forces, was repulsed ; and being taken prisoner was immediately executed.

But while Edward was thus rendering himself terrible on the one hand, he was immersed in abandoned pleasures on the other. Nature, it seems, was not unfavourable to him in that respect ; as he was universally allowed to be the most beautiful man of his time. His courtiers also seemed willing to encourage those debaucheries in which they had a share ; and the clergy, as they themselves practised every kind of lewdness with impunity, were ever ready to lend absolution to all his failings. The truth is, enormous vices had been of late so common, that adultery was held but as a very slight offence. Among the number of his mistresses was the wife of one Shore, a merchant in the city, a woman of exquisite beauty and good sense, but who had not virtue enough to resist the temptations of a beautiful man, and a monarch.

England now enjoying a temporary calm, Edward thought that the best way to ingratiate himself

himself with his subjects, would be to assert his right to his dominions in France, which the insurrections of his father had contributed to alienate during the former reign. An attempt of this kind would serve to give vent to the malignant disposition of his enemies, and would be sure to please the vulgar, who are ever more fond of splendid, than of useful acquisitions. To prosecute this scheme, the king sent off to his ally, the duke of Burgundy, a reinforcement of three thousand men, and soon after passed over himself at the head of a numerous army. Lewis the Eleventh, who was then king of France, was, not without reason, alarmed at this formidable invasion, which, as he was unable to resist, he strove to obviate by treaty. This succeeded more effectually than arms ; the two kings had an interview at the bridge of Perpignan ; and, upon the promise of a stipulated sum, Edward agreed to lead his forces back to England. This monarch wanted to return home to his mistresses to spend upon them the money he expected to receive from France ; and the French monarch hoped soon to put himself in a posture to refuse giving the sums which he had only made a promise to pay.

Upon the conclusion of this expedition, which thus ended without effect, Edward appeared no less actuated by private passions unworthy a sovereign and a statesman, than jealous of all who seemed to despise his conduct. Among the detail of private wrongs, which are too minute for history, an act of tyranny, of which he was guilty in his own family, deserves the detestation of posterity. The duke of Clarence, by all his services in deserting Warwick, had never been able to recover the king's friendship, which he had forfeited by his former confederacy with that nobleman. A pretext was therefore sought to ruin him; and the openness of his hasty temper soon gave the wished-for occasion. The king hunting one day in the park of Thomas Burdet, a creature of the duke's, he killed a white buck, which was a great favourite of the owner. Burdet vexed at the loss, broke into a passion, and wished the horns of the deer in the belly of the person who had advised the king to that insult. For this trifling exclamation, Burdet was tried for his life, and publicly executed at Tyburn. The duke of Clarence, upon the death of his friend, vented his grief in renewed reproaches against his brother, and exclaimed against the iniquity of the sentence.

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The king, highly offended with this liberty, or using that as a pretext against him, had him arraigned before the house of peers, and appeared in person as his accuser. In those times of confusion, every crime alledged by the prevailing party was fatal; the duke was found guilty; and being granted a choice of the manner in which he would die, he was privately drowned in a butt of malmsey, in the Tower; a whimsical choice, and implying that he had an extraordinary passion for that liquor.

The rest of this monarch's life was spent in riot and debauchery; in gratifications that are pleasing only to the narrow mind, in useless treaties with France, in which he was ever deceived, and in empty threats against the monarch who had deceived him. His parliament, become merely the ministers of his will, consented, at his request, to a war with France, at a time when his alliances upon the continent were so broken, that it was impossible for it to succeed. The people seemed equally pleased with the prospect of an expedition, which without serving, could only tend to impoverish the nation; and great hopes were revived of once more conquering France. While all were thus occupied with hope, or private dis-

trust, and while Edward was employed in making preparations for that enterprize, he was seized with a distemper, of which he expired, in the forty-second year of his age (and counting from his first usurpation), in the twenty-third of his reign. The character of this prince is easily summed up. His best qualities were courage and beauty; his bad, a combination of all the vices. Besides five daughters, this king left two sons; Edward, prince of Wales, his successor, then in his thirteenth year; and Richard, duke of York, in his seventh.

C H A P.



C H A P. XX.

E D W A R D V.

UPO N the death of Edward, the kingdom was divided into two new factions. The queen's family, who, during the last reign had grown into power, was become obnoxious to the old nobility, who could not bear to act in subordination to persons whom they considered as inferiors. The king himself, during his life-time, had been able to over-awe these animosities;

sities ; and on his death-bed endeavoured to guard against their future increase. He expressed a desire, that his brother the duke of Gloucester should be intrusted with the regency, and recommended peace and unanimity during the minority of his son. But the king was no sooner dead than the parties broke out with all their former resentment ; and the duke of Gloucester, a crafty, wicked, and ambitious prince, resolved to profit by their mutual contentions.

His first aim was to foment the discontents of the old nobility, by insinuating, that the queen wanted to hide the meanness of her original in a multitude of new promotions ; at the same time he redoubled his professions of zeal and attachment to that princess, and thus entirely gained her confidence. Having succeeded thus far, he gained over the duke of Buckingham and some other lords, to his interest, and prevailed upon them to second him in his attempts to get the guardianship of the young king conferred upon him, together with the custody of his person.

Being sure of the assistance of these noblemen, he resolved to take the king out of the custody of the earl of Rivers, his uncle by the mother's side ; and having procured that noble-

nobleman to be arrested, he met young Edward in person, and offered to conduct him up to London, with the most profound demonstrations of respect. Having thus secured the person of the king, his next step was to get the charge of the king's brother, a boy of about seven years old, who, with the queen, his mother, had taken sanctuary in Westminster Abbey. The queen, who had foreseen from the beginning the dangers that threatened her family, was very hardly persuaded to deliver up her child; but at the intercession of the primate, and the archbishop of York, she was at last induced to comply; and clasping the child in her arms, with a last embrace, took leave of him with a shower of tears. The young king finding that he was to have the pleasure of his brother's company, was greatly rejoiced at the queen's compliance, not considering the fatal intent of these preparations; for in a few days after the duke of Gloucester, who had been made protector of the realm, upon a pretence of guarding their persons from danger, conveyed them both to the Tower.

Having thus secured the persons of those he intended to destroy, his next step was to spread a report of their illegitimacy; and, by pretended obstacles, to put off the day appointed for
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the young king's coronation. Lord Stanley, a man of deep penetration, was the first to disclose his fears of the protector's having ill designs : and communicated his suspicions to lord Hastings, who long had been firmly attached to the king's family. Hastings would at first give the surmise no credit ; and probably his wishes that such a project might not be true, influenced his judgement, and confirmed his security. But he was soon undeceived ; for Catesby, a vile instrument of the protector, was sent to sound him, and to try whether he could not be brought over to assist the projected usurpation. Hastings treated the proposal with horror ; he professed himself immovable in his adherence to the king ; and his death was therefore resolved on by the protector.

In the mean time, orders had been dispatched to execute the lords Rivers, Gray, and Vaughan, who had been confined in Pomfret castle, and whose only crime was their attachment to the young king. On the very day on which they were beheaded, the protector summoned a council in the Tower, whither lord Hastings, amongst others, repaired, no way suspecting that his own life was in danger. The duke of Gloucester was capable of committing the most bloody and treacherous murders

murders with the utmost coolness and indifference. He came thither at nine o'clock in the morning with a most cheerful countenance, saluting the members with the utmost affability, and demonstrations of unusual good humour. He complimented the bishop of Ely on his early strawberries, and begged to have a dish of them. He then left the council, as if called away by other business ; but desired that his absence might not interrupt the debates. In about an hour he returned, quite altered in look, knitting his brows, biting his lips, and shewing, by a frequent change of countenance, the signs of some inward perturbation. A silence ensued for some time ; and the lords looked upon each other, not without reason, expecting some horrid catastrophe. At length, he broke the dreadful silence : “ My lords, cried he, what punishment do they deserve, who have conspired against my life ?” This question redoubled the astonishment of the assembly ; and the silence continuing, lord Hastings at length made answer, that whoever did so, deserved to be punished as a traitor. “ These traitors, cried the protector, are the forceless, my brother’s wife, and Jane Shore, his mistress, with others, their associates. See to what a condition

“ they

" they have reduced me by their incantations
" and witcherrafts." Upon which he laid
bare his arm, all shrivelled and decayed. The
amazement of the council seemed to increase
at this terrible accusation ; and lord Hastings
again said : " If they have committed such a
" crime, they deserve punishment." " If ?
" cried the protector, with a loud voice, dost
" thou answer me with Ifs ? I tell thee that
" they have conspired my death ; and that thou,
" traitor, art an accomplice in their crime."
He then struck the table twice with his hand ;
and the room was instantly filled with armed
men. " I arrest thee, continues he, turning to
" Hastings, for high treason ;" and at the
same time gave him in charge to the soldiers.
In the mean time, the council-room was filled
with tumult and confusion ; and though no
rescue was offered, yet the soldiers caused a
bustle, as if they apprehended danger. One
of them narrowly missed cleaving lord Stanley's
head with a battle-ax ; but he fortunately es-
caped, by shrinking under the table. In all
probability the fellow had orders for that at-
tempt ; and should Stanley be killed, his death
might be ascribed to the tumult caused by an
intended rescue. However, though he escap-
ed the blow he was arrested by the protec-
tor's

ter's order, who was well apprized of his attachment to the young king. As for lord Hastings, he was obliged to make a short confession to the next priest that was at hand; the protector crying out, by St. Paul, that he would not dine till he had seen his head taken off. He was accordingly hurried out to the little Green before the Tower-chapel, and there beheaded on a log of wood, that accidentally lay in the way. Two hours after, a proclamation, very well drawn up, was read to the citizens of London, enumerating his offences, and palliating the suddenness of his punishment. It was remarked, however, by a merchant among the auditors, that the proclamation was certainly drawn up by a spirit of prophecy.

The protector, having thus got rid of those he most feared, was willing to please the populace by punishing Jane Shore, the late king's mistress. This unfortunate woman was an enemy too humble to excite his jealousy; yet as he had accused her of witchcraft, of which all the world saw she was innocent, he thought proper to make her an example, for those faults of which she was really guilty. Jane Shore had been formerly deluded from her husband, who was a goldsmith in Lombard-street, and continued to live with Ed-

ward, the most guiltless mistress in his abandoned court. She was ever known to intercede for the distressed, and was usually applied to as mediator for mercy. She was charitable, generous, and of a most pleasing conversation; her wit being said to be as irresistible as her beauty. As she was blameless in other respects, the protector ordered her to be sued for incontinency, as having left her husband to live in adultery with another. It is very probable, that the people were not displeased at seeing one again reduced to former meanness, who had for a while been raised above them, and enjoyed the smiles of a court. The charge against her was too notorious to be denied; she pleaded guilty, and was accordingly condemned to walk bare-foot through the city, and to do penance in St. Paul's church in a white sheet, with a wax taper in her hand, before thousands of spectators. She lived above forty years after this sentence, reduced to the most extreme wretchedness; and Sir Thomas More, in the succeeding reign, assures us, that he saw her gathering herbs in a field near the city for her nightly repast; an extraordinary example of the ingratitude of courts, and the reverses of fortune.

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The protector now began to throw off the mask, and to deny his pretended regard for the sons of the late king, thinking it high time to aspire at the throne more openly. He had previously gained over the duke of Buckingham, a man of talents and power, by bribes and promises of future favour. This nobleman, therefore, used all his arts to infuse into the people an opinion of the bastardy of the late king, and also that of his children. Doctor Shaw, a popular preacher, was hired to harangue the people from St. Paul's Cross to the same purpose; where, after having displayed the incontinence of the queen, and insisting on the illegality of the young king's title, he then expatiated on the virtues of the protector. "It is the protector, cried he, who carries in his face the image of virtue, and the marks of a true descent. He alone can restore the lost glory and honour of the nation." It was hoped, upon this occasion, that some of the populace would have cried out, Long live king Richard ! but the audience remaining silent, the duke of Buckingham undertook to persuade them, in his turn. His speech was copious upon the calamities of the last reign, and the bastardy of the present race; he saw only one method of shielding off the miseries that threatened

ened the estate, which was, to elect the protector ; but he seemed apprehensive that he would never be prevailed on to accept of a crown, accompanied with such difficulty and danger. He next asked his auditors, whether they would have the protector for their king ; but was mortified to find that a total silence ensued. The mayor, who was in the secret, willing to relieve him in this embarrassing situation, observed, that the citizens were not accustomed to be harangued by a person of such quality, and would only give an answer to their recorder. This officer, therefore, repeated the duke's speech, but the people continuing still silent, " This is strange obstinacy, cried the duke; we only require of you, in plain terms, " to declare, whether or not, you will have the duke of Gloucester for your king; as the lords and commons have sufficient power without your concurrence?" After all these efforts, some of the meanest apprentices, incited by the protector's and Buckingham's servants, raising a feeble cry of, " God save king Richard!" the mob at the door, a despicable class of people, ever pleased with novelty, repeated the cry, and, throwing up their caps, repeated, A Richard! a Richard!

In this manner the duke took the advantage of this faint approbation ; and the next day, at the head of the mayor and aldermen, went to wait upon the protector, at Baynard's Castle, with offers of the crown. When Richard was told that a great multitude was waiting at the door, with his usual hypocrisy he appeared to the crowd in a gallery between two bishops, and at first seemed quite surprised at such a concourse of people. But when he was informed that their business was to offer him the crown, he declared against accepting it ; al- ledging his love for the late king, his brother, his affection for the children under his care, and his own insufficiency. Buckingham seeming displeased with this answer, muttered some words to himself, but at length plainly told him, “ That it was needless to refuse, for that “ the people were bent on making him king ; “ that they had now proceeded too far to re- “ cede ; and therefore, in case of his refusal, “ were determined to offer the crown where it “ would meet a more ready acceptance.” This was a resolution which the protector’s tender- ness for his people would not suffer him to see effected. “ I perceive, cried he, in a modest “ tone, that the kingdom is resolved to load “ me with preferments, unequal to my abilities

“ or my choice; yet since it is my duty to obey
“ the dictates of a free people, I will, though
“ reluctantly, accept their petition. I there-
“ fore, from this moment, enter upon the go-
“ vernment of England and France, with a re-
“ solution to defend the one, and subdue the
“ other.” The crowd being thus dismissed,
each man returned home, pondering upon the
proceedings of the day ; and making such re-
marks as passion, interest, or party might sug-
gest.



C H A P. XXI.

R I C H A R D III.

ONE crime ever draws on another ; justice A.D. 1483.
will revolt against fraud, and usurpation re-
quires security. As soon, therefore, as Ri-
chard was seated upon the throne, he sent
the governor of the Tower orders to put the
two young princes to death ; but this brave
man, whose name was Brackenbury, refused to
be made the instrument of a tyrant's will ;

and submissively answered, that he knew not how to embrue his hands in innocent blood. A fit instrument, however, was not long wanting ; Sir James Tyrrel readily undertook the office, and Brackenbury was ordered to resign to him the keys for one night. Tyrrel chusing three associates, Slater, Deighton, and Forest, came in the night-time to the door of the chamber, where the princes were lodged ; and sending in the assassins, he bid them execute their commission, while he himself staid without. They found the young princes in bed, and fallen into a sound sleep : after suffocating them with the bolster and pillows, they shewed their naked bodies to Tyrrel ; who ordered them to be buried at the stair-foot, deep in the ground, under an heap of stones. These facts, appeared in the succeeding reign, being confessed by the perpetrators ; who, however, escaped punishment for the crime. The bodies of the princes were afterwards sought for by Henry VII. but could not be found ; however, in the reign of Charles II. the bones of two persons, answering their age, were discovered in the very spot where it was said they were buried : they were interred in a marble monument by order of the king in Westminster Abbey.

Richard had now waded through every obstacle to the throne ; and began, after the

manner of all usurpers, to strengthen his ill-got power by foreign connections. Sensible also of the influence of pageantry and shew upon the minds of the people, he caused himself to be crowned first at London, and afterwards at York. The clergy he endeavoured to secure by great indulgencies; and his friends, by bestowing rewards on them, in proportion as they were instrumental in placing him on the throne.

But while he thus endeavoured to establish his power, he found it threatened on a quarter where he least expected an attack. The duke of Buckingham, who had been too instrumental in placing him on the throne, though he had received the greatest rewards for his services, yet continued to wish for more. He had already several posts and governments conferred upon him; but that nobleman, whose avarice was insatiable, making a demand of the confiscated lands in Hereford, to which his family had an ancient claim, Richard, either reluctantly complied with his request, or but partially indulged it, so that a coolness soon ensued; and no sooner had Buckingham supposed himself injured, than he resolved to dethrone a monarch, whose title was founded in injustice. At first, however, this aspiring

sub-

subject remained in doubt, whether he should put up for the crown himself, or set up another; but the latter resolution prevailing, he determined to declare for Henry, earl of Richmond, who was at that time an exile in Brittany, and was considered as the only surviving branch of the house of Lancaster.

Henry, earl of Richmond, was at that time detained in a kind of honourable custody by the duke of Brittany. He was one of those who had the good fortune to escape the numerous massacres of the preceding reigns; but as he was a descendant of John of Gaunt, by the female line, he was for that reason obnoxious to those in power. He had long lived in exile; and was, at one time, delivered up to the ambassadors of Edward, who were preparing to carry him over to England, when the prince, who delivered him, repented of what he had done, and took him from the ambassadors just as they were leading him on ship-board. This was the youth on whom the duke of Buckingham cast his eye, to succeed to the crown, and a negociation was begun between them for that purpose. Henry's hereditary right to the throne was doubtful, but the crimes of the usurper served to strengthen his claims. However, still further to improve his title,

title, a marriage was projected between him and the princess Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the late king, and the queen dowager was prevailed on heartily to accede to the measure.

Richard, in the mean time, either informed by his creatures, or kept distrustful by conscious guilt, began to suspect Buckingham's fidelity; and the secret informations which he daily received, left him no room to doubt of the truth of his suspicions. Impressed with this jealousy, therefore, he formed a resolution of sending for him to court; and the duke's refusing to obey the summons, confirmed him in his fears. But he soon had the plainest proofs of Buckingham's enmity, intelligence arriving that this nobleman was at the head of a large body of men in arms, and marching towards the western shore. Richard, whose courage no danger could allay, immediately put himself in a posture of defence, by levying some troops in the North, and prepared to meet the insurgents with his usual expedition. But fortune seemed his friend on the present occasion, and rendered all his preparations unnecessary. As Buckingham was advancing by hasty marches towards Gloucester, where he designed to cross the Severn, just at the time the river was swoln to such a degree, that the country

country on both sides was deluged, and even the tops of some hills were covered with water. This inundation continued for ten days; during which Buckingham's army, composed of Welchmen, could neither pass the river, nor find subsistence on their own side: they were therefore obliged to disperse, and return home, notwithstanding all the duke's efforts to prolong their stay. In this helpless situation, the duke, after a short deliberation, took refuge at the house of one Banister, who had been his servant, and who had received repeated obligations from his family. But the wicked seldom find, as they seldom exert, friendship. Banister, unable to resist the temptation of a large reward that was set upon the duke's head, went and betrayed him to the sheriff of Shropshire; who, surrounding the house with armed men, seized the duke, in the habit of a peasant, and conducted him to Salisbury; where he was instantly tried, condemned, and executed, according to the summary method practised in those ages.

In the mean time the duke of Richmond landed in England; but finding his hopes frustrated by the failure of Buckingham, he hastily set sail again, and returned to Brittany. Thus every concurrence seemed to promise

mise Richard a long possession of the crown ; however, the authority of parliament was still wanting to give sanction to the injustice of his proceedings ; but in those times of ignorance and guilt that was easily procured. An act was passed, confirming the illegitimacy of Edward's children ; an act of attainder also was confirmed against Henry, earl of Richmond ; and all the usurper's wishes seemed to be the aim of their deliberations. One thing, however, was wanting to complete Richard's security, which was the death of his rival ; to effect which, he sent ambassadors to the duke of Brittany, seemingly upon business of a public nature ; but, in reality, to treat with Landais, that prince's minister, to deliver up Richmond. The minister was base enough to enter into the negotiation ; but Richmond having had timely notice, fled away into France, and just reached the confines of that kingdom, when he found that he was pursued by those who intended giving him up to his rival.

Richard thus finding his attempts to seize his enemy's person unsuccessful, became every day more cruel, as his power grew more precarious. Among those who chiefly excited his jealousy, was the lord Stanly, who was married to the widow of Edward ; and to keep

him

him stedfast in obedience, he took his son as an hostage for the father's behaviour. He now also resolved to get rid of his present queen, Anne, to make room for a match with his niece, the princess Elizabeth, by whose alliance he hoped to cover the injustice of his claims. The lady, whom he desired to get rid of, was the widow of the young prince of Wales, whom he had murdered with his own hands at Tewksbury; and it is no slight indication of the barbarity of the times, that the widow should accept for her second lord, the murderer of her former husband. But she was now rewarded for her former inhumanity, as Richard treated her with so much pride and indifference, that she died with grief, according to his ardent expectation. However, his wishes were not crowned with success in his applications to Elizabeth: the mother, indeed, was not averse to the match; but the princess herself treated his vile addresses with contempt and detestation.

Amidst the perplexity caused by this unexpected refusal, he received information, that the earl of Richmond was once more making preparations to land in England, and assert his claims to the crown. Richard, who knew not in what quarter he might expect the invader,

had taken post at Nottingham, in the centre of the kingdom; and had given commissions to several of his creatures, to oppose the enemy wherever he should land. The account received of Richmond's preparations were not ungrounded; he set out from Harfleur in Normandy, with a retinue of about two thousand persons; and, after a voyage of six days, arrived at Milford-Haven, in Wales, where he landed without opposition. Sir Rice ap Thomas, and Sir Walter Herbert, who were intrusted to oppose him in Wales, were both in his interests; the one immediately deserted to him, and the other made but a feeble opposition. Upon news of this descent, Richard, who was possessed of courage and military conduct, his only virtues, instantly resolved to meet his antagonist, and decide their mutual pretensions by a battle. Richmond, on the other hand, being reinforced by Sir Thomas Bourchier, Sir Walter Hungerford, and others, to the number of about six thousand, boldly advanced with the same intention; and in a few days, both armies drew near Bosworth-field, to determine a contest that had now for more than forty years filled the kingdom with civil commotions, and deluged its plains with blood.

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The army of Richard was above double that of Henry ; but the chief confidence of the latter lay in the friendship and secret assurances of lord Stanly, who, with a body of seven thousand men, hovered near the field of battle, and declined engaging on either side.

Richard perceiving his enemy advance, drew up his army, consisting of about thirteen thousand men, in order of battle; he gave the command of the van-guard to the duke of Norfolk, while he led the main body himself, with the crown on his head, designing by this either to inspire the enemy with awe, or to render himself conspicuous to his own army. The van of Richmond's army, consisting of archers, was commanded by John, earl of Oxford; Sir Gilbert Talbot led the right wing, Sir John Savage the left; while the earl himself, accompanied by his uncle, the earl of Pembroke, placed himself in the main body. Lord Stanly, in the mean time, posted himself on one flank, between the two armies, while his brother took his station on the other, which was opposite. Richard seeing him thus in a situation equally convenient for joining either army, immediately sent him orders to unite himself to the main body, which the other refusing, he gave instant orders for beheading

heading lord Stanley's son, whom he still kept as an hostage. He was persuaded, however, to postpone the execution till after the fight; and attending to the more important transactions of the day, he directed the trumpets to sound to battle. The two armies approaching each other, the battle began with a shower of arrows, and soon the adverse fronts were seen closing. This was what lord Stanley had for some time expected, who immediately profiting by the occasion, joined the line of Richmond, and thus turned the fortune of the day. This measure, which was so unexpected to the men, though not to their leaders, had a proportioned effect on both armies; it inspired unusual courage into Henry's soldiers, and threw Richard's into confusion. The intrepid tyrant, perceiving the danger of his situation, spurred up his horse into the thickest of the fight, while Richmond quitted his station behind, to encourage his troops by his presence in the front. Richard perceiving him, was desirous of ending all by one blow; and with irresistible fury flew through thousands to attack him. He slew sir William Brandon, the earl's standard bearer, who attempted to stop his career. Sir John Cheney having taken Brandon's place, was thrown by him to the ground. Richmond, in the mean time, stood firm to oppose

him ; but they were separated by the interposing crowd. Richard, thus disappointed, went, by his presence, to inspire his troops at another quarter; but at length perceiving his army every where yielding or flying, and now finding that all was gone, he rushed with a loud shout into the midst of the enemy, and there met a better death than his crimes and cruelties deserved. After the battle, his body was found stripped among an heap of slain, covered over with wounds, and the eyes frightfully staring. In this manner it was thrown across an horse, the head hanging down on one side, and the legs on the other, and thus carried to Leicester. It lay there two days exposed to public view, and then was buried without farther ceremony.

Richard's crown being found by one of Henry's soldiers on the field of battle, it was immediately placed upon the head of the conqueror, while the whole army, as if inspired with one voice, cried out, " Long live king
" Henry!"

Thus ended the bloody reign of Richard ; and by his death the race of the Plantagenet kings, who had been in possession of the crown during the space of three hundred and thirty years, became extinct. Thus ended also the contests between the houses of York and Lancaster, by which most of the ancient families
of

of the kingdom were extinguished, and more than an hundred thousand men lost their lives, either by the sword or the executioner.

These dissensions had, for some time, reduced the kingdom to a state of savage barbarity. Laws, arts, and commerce, which had before emitted some feeble gleams, were entirely neglected for the practice of arms ; and to be a conqueror was sufficient, in the eyes of the brutal people, to stand for every other virtue. The English had as yet, but little idea of legal subordination ; nor could they give any applause to those who attempted to cultivate the arts of peace, the whole of their study and education being turned for war. The ferocity of the people to each other was incredible. However, the women, whatever part they took in the disturbances of the government, were exempted from capital punishments ; nor were they ever put to death, except when convicted of witchcraft or poisoning. As for the clergy, they were entirely distinct from the laity, both in customs, laws, and learning. They were governed by the code of civil law, drawn up in the times of Justinian ; while the laity were held by the common law, which had been traditional from times immemorial in the country. The clergy, however we

may be told to the contrary, understood and wrote Latin fluently ; while the laity, on the other hand, understood nothing of Latin, but applied themselves wholly to the French language, when they aspired at the character of a polite education. The clergy, as a body distinct from the state, little interested themselves in civil polity ; and perhaps they were not displeased to see the laity, whom they considered less as fellow-subjects than rivals for power, weakening themselves by continual contests, and thus rendering themselves more easily manageable. In short, as there was no knowledge of government among the individuals, but what totally resulted from power, the state was like a feverish constitution, ever subject to ferment and disorder. France, indeed, had served for some time as a drain for the peccant humours ; but when that was no longer open, the disorders of the constitution seemed daily to encrease, and vented themselves at last in all the horrors of a long continued civil war.



C H A P. XXII.

H E N R Y VII.

AFTER having presented the reader with A. D. 1485. a frightful train of treasons, stratagems, murders, and usurpations, we are now beginning to emerge into a time of greater importance and glory. We are now to view the conduct of a monarch, who, if not the best, was at, at least, the most useful of any that ever sat upon the British throne. We are now to be-

hold a nation of tumult reduced to civil subordination; an insolent and factious aristocracy humbled, wise laws enacted, commerce restored, and the peaceful arts made amiable to a people, for whom war alone heretofore had charms. Hitherto we have only beheld the actions of a barbarous nation, obeying with reluctance, and governed by caprice; but henceforward we may discover more refined politics, and better concerted schemes; human wisdom, as if roused from her lethargy of thirteen hundred years, exerting all her efforts to subdue the natural ferocity of the people, and to introduce permanent felicity.

Henry's first care upon coming to the throne, was to marry the princess Elizabeth, daughter of Edward the Fourth; and thus he blended the interests of the houses of York and Lancaster, so that ever after they were incapable of distinction. Nevertheless, being apprehensive that the people might suppose he claimed the crown in right of this union, he deferred the queen's coronation till two years after, by which he made the priority of his own claim incontestable. His reign also happily commenced with an obedience to the forms of law, of which England had hitherto seen but few examples. An act had been passed in the preceding

ceding reign for the attainder of his friends and followers, which continued still in force; and the names of many members of that house, by which it was to be repealed, were expressly mentioned in the attainder. To suffer these to join in repealing that statute, would be admitting them as judges in their own cause; but to this Henry prudently objected, obliging them to leave the house, till an act was passed for reversing their attainder.

Before this reign, it had been usual with any person who was attainted, after his execution, to give away his estates to any of the court favourites that happened to be most in confidence. Henry wisely perceived that this severity had two bad effects; the cruelty of the measure in the first place excited indignation; and it also made the favourite too powerful for subjection. In order to remedy these inconveniences, he made a law to deprive those who were found in arms of their estates and effects, and sequester them for the benefit of the crown.

A great part of the miseries of his predecessors proceeded from their poverty, which was mostly occasioned by riot and dissipation. Henry saw that money alone could turn the scale of power in his favour; and therefore

hoarded up all the confiscations of his enemies with the utmost frugality. From hence he has been accused by historians of avarice ; but that avarice which tends to strengthen government, and repress sedition, is not only excusable, but praise-worthy. Liberality in a king is too often a misplaced virtue. What is thus given, is generally extorted from the industrious and needy, to be lavished as rewards on the rich, the insidious, and the fawning, upon the sycophants of a court, or the improvers of luxurious refinement. Henry shewed himself very different from his predecessors in these respects, as he gave away very few rewards to the courtiers about his person ; and none except the needy shared his benefactions. He released all prisoners for debt in his dominions, whose debts did not amount to forty shillings, and paid their creditors from the royal coffers. Thus his œconomy rendered him not only useful to the poor, but enabled him to be just to his own creditors, either abroad or at home. Those sums which he borrowed from the city of London, or any of his subjects, he repaid at the appointed day with the utmost punctuality ; and in proportion as he was esteemed in his own dominions, he became respectable abroad.

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With regard to the king's servants, he was himself the only acting minister; and as for the rest, he did not chuse his under-agents from among the nobility, as had been most usual; but pitched upon John Morton, and Richard Fox, two clergymen, persons of industry, vigilance, and capacity, to whom he chiefly confided his affairs and secret councils. They had shared with him in all his former dangers and distresses; and he now took care that they should participate in his good fortune; the one being soon after created bishop of Ely, the other bishop of Exeter. He perhaps supposed, that as clergymen were naturally more dependent on him than the nobility, so they would be more submissive to his commands, and more active in their services.

Immediately after his marriage with Elizabeth, he issued a general pardon to all such as chose to accept it; but those lords who had been the favourites of the last reign, and long accustomed to turbulence, refused his proffered tenderness, and flew to arms. Lord Lovel, together with Humphrey and Thomas Stafford, placed themselves at the head of this insurrection; but Henry sent the duke of Bedford to oppose them, with orders to try what might be done by offering a pardon, before he made

made any attempts to reduce them. The duke punctually obeyed his instructions; and a general promise of pardon was made the rebels, which had a greater effect on the leaders than on their followers. Lovel, who had undertaken an enterprize that exceeded his courage and capacity, was so terrified with the fears of desertion among his troops, that he suddenly withdrew himself; and, after lurking some time in Lancashire, made his escape into Flanders, where he was protected by the duchess of Burgundy. The Staffords took sanctuary in the church of Colnham, a village near Abingdon; but it appearing that this church had not the privilege of giving protection, they were taken thence; the eldest Stafford was executed at Tyburn; the younger, pleading that he was misled by his brother, obtained his pardon. The rebel army, now without a leader, submitted to the mercy of the king, and were permitted to disperse without farther punishment.

But the people were become so turbulent and factious by a long course of civil war, that no governor could rule them, nor any king please; so that one rebellion seemed extinguished only to give rise to another. The king, in the beginning of his reign, had given orders

orders that the son of the duke of Clarence, whom we have already mentioned as being drowned in a wine-butt, should be taken from the prison where he had been confined by Richard, and brought to the Tower. This unfortunate youth, who was styled the earl of Warwick, was, by long confinement, so unacquainted with the world, that, as we are told, he could not tell the difference between a duck and an hen. However, the unhappy youth, harmless as he was, was made an instrument to deceive the people. There lived in Oxford one Richard Simon, a priest, who possessing some subtlety, and more rashness, trained up one Lambert Simnel, a baker's son, to counterfeit the person of the earl of Warwick; and he was previously instructed by his tutor to talk upon many facts and occurrences, as happening to him in the court of Edward. But as the imposture was not calculated to bear a close inspection, it was thought proper to shew him first at a distance; and Ireland was judged the fittest theatre for him to support his assumed character. The plot unfolded to their wishes; Simnel was received with the utmost joy, and proclaimed king of Ireland; he was conducted by the magistrates and the populace of Dublin with great pomp to the Castle,

tle, where he was treated conformably to his supposed birth and distinction.

Henry could not help feeling more uneasiness at this bare-faced imposture than it seemed to deserve; but the penetrating monarch saw that his mother-in-law was at the bottom of it; and he dreaded the fierce inquietude of her temper. He was resolved, therefore, to take the advice of his council upon this occasion; and they, after due deliberation, determined upon confining the old queen to a monastery; but, to wipe off the imputation of treason from one so nearly allied to the crown, it was given out, that she was thus punished for having formerly delivered up the princess her daughter to Richard. The people as usual murmured at the severity of her treatment; but the king, unmindful of their idle clamours, persisted in his resolution; and she remained in confinement till her death, which did not happen till several years after. The next measure was to shew Warwick to the people. In consequence of this, he was taken from the Tower, and led through the principal streets of London, after which he was conducted in solemn procession to St. Paul's, where great numbers were assembled to see him. Still, however, they proceeded in Dublin

lin to honour their pretended monarch; and he was crowned with great solemnity, in presence of the earl of Kildare, the chancellor, and the other officers of state. Such impostors upon the people, were very frequent at that time, in several parts of Europe. Lorraine, Naples, and Portugal, had their impostors, who continued to deceive for a long time without detection. In fact, the inhabitants of every country, were so much confined within their own limits, and knew so little of what was passing in the rest of the world, that any distant story might be propagated, how improbable soever. In this manner, king Simnel, being now joined by lord Lovel, and one or two lords more of the discontented party, resolved to pass over into England; and accordingly landed in Lancashire, from whence he marched to York, expecting the country would rise and join him as he marched along. But in this he was deceived; the people averse to join a body of German and Irish troops, by whom he was supported, and kept in awe by the king's reputation, remained in tranquility, or gave all their assistance to the royal cause. The earl of Lincoln, therefore, a disaffected lord, to whom the command of the rebel army was given, finding no hopes but in speedy vic-

tory, was determined to bring the contest to a short issue. The opposite armies met at Stoke, in the county of Nottingham, and fought a battle, which was more bloody, and more obstinately disputed, than could have been expected from the inequality of their forces. But victory at length declared in favour of the king, and it proved decisive. Lord Lincoln perished in the field of battle; lord Lovel was never more heard of, and it was supposed he shared the same fate. Simnel, with his tutor Simon, was taken prisoner; and four thousand of the common men fell in battle. Simon being a priest could not be tried by the civil power, and was only committed to close confinement. Simnel was too contemptible to excite the king's fears or resentment; he was pardoned, and made a scullion in the king's kitchen, whence he was afterwards advanced to the rank of falconer, in which mean employment he died.

Things being thus quietly settled at home, Henry began to turn his thoughts towards his continental connections, and to establish some degree of understanding between him and the neighbouring states around him. He was too wise a prince, not to perceive the fatality of conquests upon the continent, which could at best

best produce no other reputation than the empty one of military glory. Yet, while he internally despised such pernicious triumphs, he was obliged, in order to gain popularity, to countenance them. He, therefore, frequently boasted that he was determined to ravish his kingdom of France from the usurpers, who had long possessed it ; and that he would lay the whole country in blood. But these were the distant threats of a crafty politician ; there was nothing more distant from his heart. As far as negociations went, he did all in his power to keep the interests of that kingdom so nearly balanced, as to prevent any from growing too powerful ; but as for succours of men and money, he too well knew the value of both to lavish them, as his predecessors had done, upon such fruitless projects.

About this time the nobles of Brittany, being disgusted with their minister, Peter Landais, rose in conspiracy against him, and put him to death. Willing to defend one crime by another, they called in the aid of the French monarch, to protect them from the resentment of their own sovereign. The French monarch quickly obeyed the call ; but instead of only bringing the nobles assistance, over-ran and took possession of the greatest part of the country. A.D. 1488.

country. The aid of Henry was implored by the distressed Bretons; but this monarch appeared more willing to assist them by negociations than by arms; but though he determined to maintain a pacific conduct, as far as the situation of his affairs would permit, he knew too well the warlike disposition of his subjects, and their desires to engage in any scheme that promised the humiliation of France. He resolved, therefore, to take advantage of this propensity; and to draw some supplies of money from the people, on pretence of giving assistance to the duke of Brittany. He accordingly summoned a parliament to meet at Westminster, and easily persuaded them to grant him a considerable supply. But money was, at that time, more easily granted than levied in England. A new insurrection began in Yorkshire, the people resisting the commissioners who were appointed to levy the tax. The earl of Northumberland attempted to enforce the king's command; but the populace, being by this taught to believe that he was the adviser of their oppressions, flew to arms, attacked his house, and put him to death. The mutineers did not stop there; but, by the advice of one John Achamber, a seditious fellow of mean birth, they chose sir John Egremont for

for their leader, and prepared themselves for a vigorous resistance. The king, upon hearing this rash proceeding, immediately levied a force, which he put under the earl of Surry; and this nobleman, encountering the rebels, dissipated the tumult, and took their leader, Achamber, prisoner. Achamber was shortly after executed; but sir John Egremont fled to the court of the duchess of Burgundy, the usual retreat of all who were obnoxious to government in England:

As Henry had gone thus far in preparations for a war with France, he supposed that it would be too flagrant an imposition upon the credulity of the nation, not to put a part of his threats in execution. France was by this time possessed of all Brittany; and a marriage had been lately concluded between the French monarch, and the dutchess of the last named territory. This accession of power, in a rival state, was formidable not only to Henry, but to Europe. He therefore prepared to make a descent upon France; and accordingly landed at Calais, with an army of twenty-five thousand foot, and sixteen hundred horse, which he put under the command of the duke of Bedford and the earl of Oxford. But notwithstanding this appearance of an hostile disposition,

there had been secret advances made towards a peace three months before, and commissioners had been appointed to treat on the terms. The demands of Henry were wholly pecuniary ; and the king of France, who deemed the peaceable possession of Brittany an equivalent for any sum, readily agreed to the proposals made him. He engaged to pay Henry near two hundred thousand pounds sterling, as a reimbursement for the expences of this expedition ; and he stipulated to pay a yearly pension to him, and his heirs, of twenty-five thousand crowns more.

A. D. 1492. Henry, having thus made an advantageous peace, had reason to flatter himself with the prospect of long tranquillity, but he was mistaken ; he had still enemies who found means to embroil him in fresh difficulties and dangers. One would have imagined, that from the ill success of Simnel's imposture, few would be willing to embark in another of a familiar kind ; however, the old duchess of Burgundy, rather irritated than discouraged by the failure of her past enterprizes, was determined to disturb that government which she could not subvert. She first procured a report to be spread, that the young duke of York, said to have been murdered in the Tower, was still living ; and finding the rumour greedily received, she soon pro-

produced a young man, who assumed his name and character. The person pitched upon to sustain this part, was one Osbeck or Warbeck, the son of a converted Jew, who had been over in England during the reign of Edward IV. where he had this son named Peter, but corrupted, after the Flemish manner, into Peterkin or Perkin. It was by some believed that Edward, among his other amorous adventures, had a secret correspondence with Warbeck's wife, which might account for a striking resemblance between young Perkin and that monarch. Perkin, following the fortunes of his father, had travelled for many years from place to place; so that his birth and circumstances became thereby unknown, and difficult to be traced by the most diligent enquiry. The variety of his adventures might have contributed to assist the natural sagacity, and versatility of his disposition; as he seemed to be a youth capable of sustaining any part or any assumed character. The duchess of Burgundy found this youth entirely suited to her purposes; and her lessons, instructing him to personate the duke of York, were easily learned, and strongly retained by a youth of such quick apprehension. In short, his graceful air, his courtly address, his easy manners, and elegant conversation, were ca-

pable of imposing upon all but such as were conscious of the imposture.

The kingdom of Ireland, which still retained its attachments to the house of York, was pitched upon as the proper place for Perkin's first appearance, as it before had favoured that of Simnel. He landed at Corke ; and immediately assuming the name of Richard Plantagenet, drew to him numerous patizans among that credulous people. He wrote letters to the earls of Desmond and Kildare, inviting them to join his party ; he dispersed every where the strange intelligence of his escape from his uncle Richard's cruelty ; and men, fond of every thing new and wonderful, began to make him the general subject of their discourse, and even the object of their favour. From Ireland his fame soon spread over into France ; and Charles sent Perkin an invitation to his court, where he received him with all the marks of consideration that were due to his supposed dignity. The youth, no way dazzled by his elevation, supported the prepossession which was spread abroad in his favour ; so that England itself soon began to give credit to his pretensions ; while sir George Neville, sir John Taylor, and above a hundred gentlemen more, went to Paris to pay him

him homage, and offer him services. Upon the peace being shortly after concluded between France and England, the impostor was obliged to make his residence at the court of his old patrons, the duchesses of Burgundy, and the interview between these conscious deceivers was truly ridiculous. The duchess affected the utmost ignorance of his pretensions, and even put on the appearance of distrust; having, as she said, been already deceived by Simnel. She seemed to examine all his assertions with the most scrupulous diffidence; put many particular questions to him, affected astonishment at his answers, and at last, after long and severe scrutiny, burst out into joy and admiration at his delivery, acknowledging him as her nephew, as the true image of Edward, and legitimate successor to the English throne. She immediately assigned him an equipage suitable to his pretensions, appointed him a guard of thirty halberdiers; and on all occasions honoured him with the appellation of the White Rose of England.

The English, ever ready to revolt, gave credit to all these absurdities; while the young man's prudence, conversation, and deportment, served to confirm what their disaffection and credulity had begun. All such as were dis-

gusted with the king, prepared to join him, but particularly those that were formerly Henry's favourites, and had contributed to place him on the throne ; thinking their services could never be sufficiently repaid, now privately abetted the imposture, and became heads of the conspiracy. These were joined by numbers of the inferior class, some greedy of novelty, some blindly attached to their leaders, and some induced by their desperate fortunes to wish for a change.

Among those who secretly abetted the cause of Perkin, were lord Fitzwalter, sir Simon Mountfort, sir Thomas Thwaits, and sir Robert Clifford. But the person of the greatest weight, and the most dangerous opposition, was sir William Stanley the lord chamberlain, and brother to the famous lord Stanley, who had contributed to place Henry on the throne. This personage, either moved by a blind credulity, or more probably by a restless ambition, entered into a regular conspiracy against the king ; and a correspondence was settled between the malcontents in England and those in Flanders.

While the plot was thus carrying on in all quarters, Henry was not inattentive to the designs of his enemies. He spared neither labour

nor expence to detect the falsehood of the pretender to his crown ; and was equally assiduous in finding out who were his secret abettors. For this purpose he dispersed his spies thro' all Flanders, and brought over, by large bribes, some of those whom he knew to be in the enemies interests. Among these, sir Robert Clifford was the most remarkable, both for his consequence, and the confidence with which he was trusted. From this person Henry learned the whole of Perkin's birth and adventures, together with the names of all those who had secretly combined to assist him. The king was pleased with the discovery ; but the more trust he gave to his spies, the higher resentment did he feign against them.

At first he was struck with indignation at the ingratitude of many of those about him ; but concealing his resentment for a proper opportunity, he, almost at the same instant, arrested Fitzwalter, Mountford, and Thwaits, together with William Danbery, Robert Ratcliff, Thomas Cressenor, and Thomas Astwood. All these were arraigned, convicted, and condemned for high treason. Mountford, Ratcliff, and Danbery, were immediately executed ; the rest received pardon. But the principal delinquent yet remain to be punished, whose station,

as lord chamberlain, and whose connexions with many of the principal men in the kingdom, seemed to exempt him from censure. To effect this, Clifford was directed to come over privately to England, and to accuse Stanley in person, which he did, to the seeming astonishment of all present. Henry affected to receive the intelligence as false and incredible ; but Clifford persisting in his accusation, Stanley was committed to custody, and soon after examined before the council. Finding his guilt but too clearly proved, he did not attempt to conceal it, supposing that an open confession might serve as an atonement, or trusting to his former services for pardon and security. In this he was mistaken ; after a delay of six weeks, during which time the king affected to deliberate upon his conduct, he was brought to trial, when he was condemned, and shortly after beheaded. Through the whole of this reign, the king seemed to make a distinction in the crimes of those who conspired against him : whenever the conspirator took up arms against him, from a conscientious adherence to principle, and a love of the house of York, he generally found pardon ; but when a love of change, or an impatience of subordination inspired the attempt, the offender was sure to be treated with the utmost rigour of the law.

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While the adherents of Perkin were thus disappointed in England, he himself attempted landing in Kent ; the gentlemen of which county gathered in a body to oppose him. Their aim was to allure him on shore by profers of assistance, and then seize his person ; but the wary youth, observing that they had more order and regularity in their movements than could be supposed in new levied forces, refused to commit himself into their hands ; wherefore they set upon his attendants, who had come a-shore, of whom they took a hundred and fifty prisoners. These were tried and condemned, and all of them executed by order of the king, who was resolved to use no lenity to men of such desperate fortunes.

The young adventurer finding his hopes frustrated in this attempt, went next to try his fortune in Scotland. In that country his luck seemed greater than in England. James the Fourth, the king of that country, received him with great cordiality ; he was seduced to believe the story of his birth and adventures ; and he carried his confidence so far, as to give him in marriage lady Catherine Gordon, daughter to the earl of Huntley, and a near kinswoman of his own ; a young a lady eminent for

for virtue as well as beauty. But not content with these instances of favour, he was resolved to attempt setting him on the throne of England. It was naturally expected, that upon Perkin's first appearance in that kingdom, all the friends of the house of York would rise in his favour. Upon this ground therefore the king of Scotland entered England with a numerous army, and proclaimed the young adventurer wherever he went. But Perkin's pretensions, attended by repeated disappointments, were now become stale, even in the eyes of the populace; so that, contrary to expectation, none were found to second his pretensions. Being disappointed in this, he once more returned to Edinburgh, where he continued to reside, till, upon the conclusion of a treaty of peace between the two kingdoms, he was once more obliged to leave Scotland, and to seek for a new protector.

In the mean time, Henry found little uneasiness at Perkin's irruption, as he was sensible it would serve him as a pretext to a demand for farther supplies from parliament, with which he knew they would readily comply. The vote was in fact easily enough obtained; but he found it not so easy to leavy the money. The inhabitants of Cornwall were

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the first to refuse contributing supplies for the safety of the northern parts of the kingdom, which were so very remote from them. Their discontents were further inflamed by one Michael Joseph, a farrier of Bodin, who had long been the spokesman of the multitude. To him was joined one Thomas Flam mock, a lawyer; and, under the conduct of these two, the insurgents passed through the county of Devon, and reached that of Somerset, where they were joined by Lord Audley, a nobleman of an ancient family, popular in his deportment, but vain, ambitious, and restless in his temper. Thus headed, and breathing destruction to the king's commissioners, they marched with great speed towards London, without, however, committing any devastations by the way. At length, without receiving countenance or reinforcement on their march, they pitched their camp near Eltham, not far from London. Henry, whose courage and intrepidity were never to be moved, had some time before levied an army to oppose the Scots; and this he ordered southward to suppress the Cornish insurrection. On other occasions it was usual with him to hasten to a decision; and it was a saying with him, that he only desired to see his rebels; but as

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the present insurgents behaved in an inoffensive manner, he protracted his attack for some time, till at length it was begun by lord Daubeney, who, after some resistance, broke, and put them to flight. Lord Audley, Flammock, and Joseph, their leaders, were taken and executed ; but the rest, to the number of sixteen thousand, were dismissed without further punishment.

A. D. 1497. In the mean time, the restless Perkin being dismissed Scotland, and meeting with a very cold reception from the Flemings, who now desired to be at peace with the English, resolved to continue his scheme of opposition ; and once more took refuge among the wilds and fastnesses of Ireland. Impatient, however, of an inactive life, he held a consultation with his followers, Herne, Skelton, and Astley, three broken tradesmen ; and by their advice he resolved to try the affections of the Cornish men, whose discontents the king's late lenity had only contributed to inflame. These were a tumultuous multitude, too ignorant for gratitude ; and upon their return ascribed the royal clemency to fear, inducing their countrymen to believe that the whole kingdom was ready to rise to vindicate their quarrel. It was in consequence of these suggestions that they

they determined to send for Perkin to put himself at their head; and he no sooner made his appearance among them at Bodmin in Cornwall, than the populace, to the number of three thousand men, flocked to his standard. Elated with this appearance of success, he took on him, for the first time, the title of Richard the Fourth, king of England; and, not to suffer the spirits of his adherents to languish, he led them to the gates of Exeter. Finding the inhabitants obstinate in refusing to admit him, and being unprovided with artillery to force an entrance, he resolved to continue before it, until possessed of a sufficient force to make a farther progress into the kingdom. In the mean time, Henry being informed of his landing and his designs, expressed great joy upon the occasion, declaring that he should now have the pleasure of an interview with a person whom he long wished to see. All the courtiers, sensible of Perkin's desperate situation, and the general suspicion there was of their own fidelity, prepared themselves to assist the king with great alacrity. The lords Daubeney and Broke, the earl of Devonshire, and the duke of Buckingham, all appeared at the head of their respective forces, and seemed eager for an op-

portunity of displaying their courage and loyalty. Perkin being informed of these great preparations, broke up the siege of Exeter, and retired to Taunton. His followers by this time amounted to seven thousand men, and appeared ready to defend his cause; but his heart failed him; and instead of bringing them into the field, he privately deserted them, and took sanctuary in the monastery of Beau-lieu in the New Forest. His wretched adherents, left to the king's mercy, found him still willing to pardon; and, except a few of the ring-leaders, none were treated with capital severity. The lady Catharine Gordon, wife to Perkin, fell into the conqueror's hands, and was treated by him with all the lenity due to her sex and quality. She was placed in a reputable station near the person of the queen, and assigned a pension, which she enjoyed till her death. But the manner in which Perkin himself was to be treated appeared more doubtful. At first it was suggested by some, that he should be taken forcibly from the sanctuary to which he had fled, and made a public example; but Henry thought that milder methods would answer as well. He therefore employed some persons to treat with Perkin, and to persuade him, under promise of a pardon,

don, to deliver himself up to justice, and to confess and explain all the circumstances of his imposture. His affairs being altogether desperate, he embraced the king's offers, without hesitation, and quitted the sanctuary. Henry being desirous of seeing him, he was brought to court, and conducted through the streets of London in a kind of mock triumph, amidst the derision and insults of the populace, which he bore with the most dignified resignation. He was then compelled to sign a confession of his former life and conduct, which was printed and dispersed throughout the nation; but it was so defective and contradictory, that instead of explaining the pretended imposture, it left it still more doubtful than before; and this youth's real pretensions are to this very day an object of dispute among the learned. However, though his life was granted him, he was still detained in custody, and keepers were appointed to watch over his conduct. But his impatience of any confinement could not be controuled; he broke loose from his keepers, and flying to the sanctuary of Shyne, put himself in the hands of the prior of that monastery. He was once again prevailed on to trust himself to the king's mercy; but, in order to reduce him to the low-

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est state of contempt, he was set in the stocks at Westminster and Cheapside, and obliged to read aloud, in both places, the confession which had been formerly published in his name. From this place of scorn, he was conveyed to the Tower, where it was thought the strength of his prison would be sufficient to restrain his restless active disposition; but nothing could repress his habits of inquietude. He had insinuated himself into the intimacy of four servants of the lieutenant of the Tower; and by their means opened a correspondence with the unfortunate Warwick, who had been confined there for many years before, and kept in a state of utter ignorance. In all probability Perkin was permitted to enter into this correspondence with him by the connivance of the king, who hoped that his enterprising genius, and insinuating address, would engage the simple Warwick in some project that would furnish a pretext for taking away their lives, which accordingly happened. Perkin tampered with the servants, who, it is said, agreed to murder their master, and thus secure the gates of the Tower, by which the prisoners might make their escape to some secure part of the kingdom.

That the danger might appear more imminent and pressing, so as to justify the steps
which

which Henry intended to take, another disturbance was raised at the same time in Kent, where a young man called Ralph Wilford, the son of a cordwainer, personated the earl of Warwick, under the conduct and direction of one Patrick, an Augustine monk, who in his sermons exhorted the people to take arms in his favour. This friar, who had been used as a tool for the king's emissaries, was arrested, together with his pupil; and Wilford was hanged without ceremony, but the tutor obtained his pardon. This was the prelude to the fate of Perkin, and the earl of Warwick; the former of whom was tried at Westminster; and being convicted on the evidence of the servants of the Tower, was hanged at Tyburn with John Walter, mayor of Corke, who had constantly adhered to his cause in all the vicissitudes of his fortune. Blewet and Astwood, two of the servants, underwent the same fate; but six other persons, condemned as accomplices in the same conspiracy, were pardoned. In a few days after Perkin's execution, the wretched earl of Warwick was tried by his peers; and being convicted of high-treason, in consequence of pleading guilty to the arraignment, was beheaded on Tower-Hill, and in him ended the last male branch of the house

cf Plantagenet. The deplorable end of this innocent nobleman, and the fate of Perkin, who, notwithstanding all that appeared against him, was, by the unprejudiced part of the nation, deemed the real son of king Edward, filled the whole kingdom with such aversion to the government of king Henry, that to throw the odium from himself, he was obliged to lay it to the account of his ally, Ferdinand of Arragon, who he said scrupled his alliance, while any prince of the house of York remained alive.

There had been hitherto nothing in this reign but plots, treasons, insurrections, impositions, and executions; and it is probable that Henry's severity proceeded from the continual alarms in which they held him. It is certain, that no prince ever loved peace more than he; and much of the ill-will of his subjects arose from his attempts to repress their inclinations for war. The usual preface to all his treaties was, "That when Christ came into the world "peace was sung; and when he went out of "the world peace was bequeathed." He had no ambition to extend his power, except only by treaties and by wisdom: by these he rendered himself much more formidable to his neighbours, than his predecessors had by their victories;

tories; they became terrible to their own subjects; he was chiefly dreaded by rival kings.

He had all along two points principally in view; one to depress the nobility and clergy, and the other to exalt and humanize the populace. From the ambition and turbulence of the former, and from the wretchedness and credulity of the latter, all the troubles in the former reigns had taken their original. In the feudal times, every nobleman was possessed of a certain number of subjects, over whom he had an absolute power; and therefore, upon every slight disgust, he was able to influence them to join him in his revolt or disobedience. Henry, therefore, wisely considered, that the giving these petty tyrants a power of selling their estates, which before this time were unalienable, would greatly weaken their interest. With this view, he procured an act, by which the nobility were granted a power of disposing of their estates; a law infinitely pleasing to the commons, and not disagreeable even to the nobles, since they had thus an immediate resource for supplying their taste for prodigality, and answering the demands of their creditors. The blow reached them in their posterity alone; but they were too ignorant to be affected by such distant distresses,

His next scheme was to prevent their giving liveries to many hundreds of their dependants, who were thus retained to serve their lord, and kept like the soldiers of a standing army, to be ready at the command of their leader. By an act passed in this reign, none but menial servants were permitted to wear a livery, under severe penalties; and this law was enforced with the most punctual observance. The king one day paying a visit to the earl of Oxford, was entertained by him with all possible splendour and hospitality. When he was ready to depart, he saw ranged upon both sides a great number of men dressed up in very rich liveries, apparently to do him honour. The king, surprised at such a number of servants, as he pretended to suppose them, asked lord Oxford whether he entertained such a large number of domestics; to which the earl, not perceiving the drift of the question, replied, that they were only men whom he kept in pay to do him honour upon such occasions. At this the king started back, and said, "By my faith, my lord, I thank you for your good cheer; but I must not suffer to have the laws broken before my face; my attorney-general must talk with you." Oxford is said to have paid no less than fifteen thousand marks as a compensation for his offence.

We have already seen, in a thousand instances, what a perverted use was made of monasteries, and other places appropriated to religious worship, by the number of criminals who found sanctuary and protection there. This privilege the clergy assumed as their undoubted right; and those places of pretended sanctity were now become the abode of murderers, robbers, and conspirators. Witches and magicians were the only persons that were forbid to avail themselves of the security these sanctuaries afforded; and they whose crimes were only fictitious, were the only people who had not the benefit of such a retreat. Henry used all his interest with the pope to get these sanctuaries abolished; but was not able to succeed. All that he could procure was, that if thieves, murderers, or robbers registered as sanctuary men, should sally out, and commit fresh offences, and retreat again, in such cases they might be taken out of the sanctuary, and delivered up to justice.

Henry was not remiss in abridging the pope's power, while at the same time he professed the utmost submission to his commands, and the greatest respect for the clergy. The pope at one time was so far imposed upon by his seeming attachment to the church, that he

even invited him to renew the crusades for recovering the Holy Land. Henry's answer deserves to be remembered. He assured his holiness that no prince in Christendom would be more forward to undertake so glorious and necessary an expedition ; but as his dominions lay very distant from Constantinople, it would be better to apply to the kings of France and Spain for their assistance ; and in the mean time he would go to their aid himself, as soon as all the differences between the Christian princes should be brought to an end. This was at once a polite refusal, and an oblique reproach.

But while he thus employed his power in lowering the influence of the nobles and clergy, he was using every art to extend the privileges of the people. In former reigns they were sure to suffer on whatever side they fought, when they were unsuccessful. This rendered each party desperate in a declared civil war, as no hopes of pardon remained, and consequently terrible slaughters were seen to ensue. He therefore procured an act, by which it was established, that no person should be impeached or attainted for assisting the king for the time being, or, in other words, the sovereign who should be then actually in possession of the throne.

throne. This excellent statute served to repress the desire of civil war, as several would naturally take arms in defence of that side on which they were certain of losing nothing by a defeat; and numbers would thus serve to intimidate rebellion. Thus the common people, no longer maintained in vicious idleness by their superiors, were obliged to become industrious for their support. The nobility, instead of vying with each other in the number and boldness of their retainers, acquired by degrees a more civilized species of emulation; and endeavoured to excel in the splendour and elegance of their equipages, houses, and tables. In fact, the king's greatest efforts were directed to promote trade and commerce, because this naturally introduces a spirit of liberty among the people, and disengaged them from all dependence, except upon the laws and the king. Before this great æra, all our towns owed their original to some strong castle in the neighbourhood, where some powerful lord generally resided. These were at once fortresses for protection, and prisons for all sorts of criminals. In this castle there was usually a garrison armed and provided, depending entirely on the nobleman's support and assistance. To these seats of protection, artifi-

eers, victuallers, and shop-keepers, naturally resorted, and settled on some adjacent spot to furnish the lord and his attendants with all the necessaries they might require. The farmers also, and the husbandmen in the neighbourhood, built their houses there, to be protected against the numerous gangs of robbers called Robertsmen, that hid themselves in the woods by day, and infected the open country by night. Henry endeavoured to bring the towns from such a neighbourhood, by inviting the inhabitants to a more commercial situation. He attempted to teach them frugality, and a just payment of debts, by his own example; and never once omitted the rights of the merchant, in all his treaties with foreign princes.

But it must not be concealed, that from a long contemplation upon the relative advantages of money, he at last grew into an habit of considering it as valuable for itself alone. As he grew old his avarice seemed to predominate over his ambition; and the methods he took to encrease his treasures, cannot be justified by his most ardent admirers. He had found two ministers, Empson and Dudley, perfectly qualified to second his avaricious intentions. They were both lawyers; the first of mean birth, brutal manners, and an unrelenting temper; the

the second, better born, and better bred, but equally severe and inflexible. It was their usual practice to commit, by indictment, such persons to prison as they intended to oppress; from whence they seldom got free, but by paying heavy fines, which were called mitigations and compositions. By degrees, as they were grown more hardened in oppression, the very forms of law were omitted; they determined in a summary way upon the properties of the subject, and confiscated their effects to the royal treasury. But the chief instruments of oppression employed by these ministers were the penal statutes, which, without consideration of rank, quality, or services, were rigidly put in execution against all men.

In this manner, was the latter part of this active monarch's reign employed in schemes to strengthen the power of the crown, by amassing money, and extending the power of the people. He had the satisfaction about that time of completing a marriage between Arthur, the prince of Wales, and the infanta Catharine of Spain, which had been projected and negotiated during the course of seven years. But this marriage proved, in the event, unprosperous. The young prince sickened and died in a few months after, very much regretted by the whole

A.D. 1500.

whole nation ; and the princess was obliged shortly after to marry his second son Henry, who was created prince of Wales in the room of his brother. The prince himself made all the opposition which a youth of twelve years of age was capable of ; but as the king persisted in his resolution, the marriage was, by the pope's dispensation, shortly after solemnized.

The magnificence of these nuptials was soon after eclipsed by the accidental arrival of Philip, the arch-duke of Castile, with Joan his consort. These personages had embarked for Spain during the winter season, in order to take the advantage of an invitation, which the people of that country had offered to place them upon the Spanish throne. Meeting, however, with a violent tempest in their voyage, they were obliged to take shelter in Weymouth harbour, where they were honourably received by sir John Trenchard, a gentleman of authority in the county of Dorset. The king soon

A. D. 1506. after being informed of their arrival, sent in all haste the earl of Arundel to compliment them on their safe escape ; and to inform them that he intended shortly paying them a visit in person. Philip knew that this was but a polite method of detaining him ; and, for the sake of dispatch, he resolved to anticipate his visit, and

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to have an interview with him at Windsor. Henry received him with all the magnificence possible, and with all seeming cordiality; but was resolved to reimburse himself for the expense of his pageants, by advantages that would be more substantially conducive to his own interests, and those of the nation. There had been some years before a plot carried on against him by the earl of Suffolk; for which Sir James Tyrrel, and Sir James Wyndham, had been condemned and executed, while Suffolk, the original contriver, had made his escape into the Low Countries, where he found protection from Philip. But he was now given up at Henry's request, and being brought over to England, he was imprisoned in the Tower. A treaty of commerce was also agreed upon between the two sovereigns; which was at that time of the greatest benefit to England, and continues to remain as the ground-work of all other commercial treaties to this day.

Henry having thus seen England in a great measure civilized by his endeavours, his people pay their taxes without constraint, the nobles confessing a just subordination, the laws alone inflicting punishment, the towns beginning to live independent of the powerful, commerce every day encreasing, the spirit of faction extinguished,

tinguished, and foreigners either fearing England or seeking its alliance, he began to perceive the approaches of his end. He then resolved to reconcile himself to heaven; and by distributing alms, founding religious houses, and granting a general pardon to all his subjects, to make an atonement for the errors of his reign. It was in this disposition that he died with the gout in his stomach, having lived fifty-two years and reigned twenty-three. Since the times of Alfred, England had not seen such another king. He rendered his subjects powerful and happy, and wrought a greater change in the manners of the people, than it was possible to suppose could be effected in so short a time. If he had any fault that deserves to be marked with reproach, it was that having begun his reign with œconomy, as he grew old his desires seemed to change their object from the use of money, to the pleasure of hoarding it. But he ought in this to be pardoned, as he only saved for the public; the royal coffers being then the only treasury of the state; and in proportion to the king's finances, the public might be said to be either rich or indigent.

About this time all Europe, as well as England, seemed to rouse from the long lethargy,

thargy, during which it continued for above twelve hundred years. France, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden enjoyed excellent monarchs; who encouraged and protected the rising arts, and spread the means of happiness. The Portuguese sailed round the Cape of Good Hope, under the command of Vasquez de Gama; and the Spaniards, under the conduct of Columbus, had made the discovery of the new world of America. It was by accident only, that Henry had not a considerable share in these great naval discoveries; for Columbus, after meeting with many repulses from the courts of Portugal and Spain, sent his brother Bartholomew into England, in order to explain his projects to the king, and to crave his protection for the execution of them. Henry invited Columbus to England; but his brother in returning being taken by pirates, was detained in his voyage; and Columbus, in the mean time, succeeding with Isabella, happily effected his enterprize. Henry was not discouraged by this disappointment; he fitted out Sebastian Cabot, a Venetian dwelling at Bristol, and sent him westward in search of new countries. This adventurer discovered the main land of America to the North; then sailed Southward, along the coast, and discovered Newfoundland and other

A.D. 1498.

other countries; but returned without making any settlement. The king, soon after, expended fourteen thousand pounds in building one ship, called the **GREAT HARRY**. This was, properly speaking, the first ship in the English navy. Before this period, when the king wanted a fleet, he had no other expedient but to hire ships from the merchants.



C H A P. XXIII.

H E N R Y VIII.

No prince ever came to the throne with a A.D. 1509. conjunction of circumstances more in his favour than Henry VIII. who now, in the eighteenth year of his age, undertook the government of the kingdom. His prudent father left him a peaceful throne, a well-stored treasury, and an undisputed succession. By his father's side he claimed from the house of Lancaster, and
by

by his mother's from that of York. He was in friendship with all the powers of Europe, and his subjects were every day growing more powerful and more wealthy ; commerce and arts had for some time been introduced into the kingdom, and the English seemed willing to give them a favourable reception. The young king himself was beautiful in person, expert in polite exercises, open and liberal in his air, and loved by all his subjects. The old king, who was himself a scholar, had him instructed in all the learning of the times ; so that he was an adept in school divinity before the age of eighteen.

But favourable as these circumstances were, Henry soon shewed that they went but a short way in forming a good character ; they were merely the gifts of nature, or accomplishments implanted by the assiduity of his father ; but he wanted the more solid advantages, which were to be of his own formation, a good heart, and a sound understanding. The learning he had, if it may deserve that appellation, served only to inflame his pride, but not controul his vicious affections ; the love of his subjects broke out in their flattery, and this was another meteor to lead him astray. His vast wealth, instead of relieving the public, or encreasing his

his power, only contributed to supply his debaucheries, or gratify the rapacity of the ministers of his pleasures. But it had been happy for his people if his faults had rested here; he was a tyrant; humanity takes the alarm at his cruelties; and however fortunate some of his measures might prove in the event, no good man but must revolt at his motives, and the means he took for their accomplishment.

The first action which shewed that the present reign was to be very different from the former, was the punishment of Empson and Dudley, who were obnoxious to the populace for having been the ready instruments of the late king's rapacity. They were immediately cited before the council, in order to answer for their conduct; but Empson, in his defence, alledging that so far from deserving censure for his past conduct, he was confident his actions rather merited reward and approbation. Tho' a strict execution of the law was the crime of which he and Dudley were accused; although these laws had been established by the voluntary consent of the people; notwithstanding all their expostulations, Empson and Dudley were sent to the Tower, and soon after brought to their trial. As the strict discharge of their duty, in executing the laws, could not be al-

ledged against them as a crime, to gratify the people with their punishment, they were accused of having entered into a conspiracy against the present king ; and of intentions to seize, by force, the administration of government. Nothing could be more improbable and unsupported than such a charge; nevertheless the jury were so far infected with popular prejudice, that they gave a verdict against them; and they were both executed, some time after, by a warrant from the king.

This measure, which betrayed an unjust compliance with popular clamour, was followed by another still more detrimental to the nation, although still more pleasing to the people. Julius the Second was at that time pope, and had filled all Europe with his intrigues and ambition; but his chief resentment was levelled against Lewis, king of France, who was in possession of some valuable provinces of Italy, from which he hoped, by his intrigues, to remove him. For this purpose he entered into a treaty with Ferdinand, king of Spain, and Henry of England; to each of whom he offered such advantages as were most likely to inflame their ambition, in case they fell upon Lewis on their respective quarters; while he undertook himself to find him employment in Italy.

Italy. Henry, who had no other motives but the glory of the expedition, and the hopes of receiving the title of the Most Christian King, which the pope assured him would soon be wrested from Lewis, to be conferred upon him, readily undertook to defend his cause ; and his parliament being summoned, as readily granted supplies for a purpose so much favoured by the people. The spirit of chivalry and foreign conquest was not yet quite extinguished in England ; the kingdom of France was still an object they desired to possess, and Henry in compliance with their wishes, gave out that he intended striking for the crown. It was in vain that one of his old prudent counsellors objected, that conquests on the continent would only drain the kingdom, without enriching it ; and that England, from its situation, was not fitted to enjoy extensive empire : the young king, deaf to all remonstrances, and burning with military ardour, resolved to undertake the war. The marquis of Dorset was first sent over, with a large body of forces, to Fontarabia, to assist the operations of Ferdinand ; but that faithless and crafty monarch had no intentions of effectually seconding their attempts, wherefore they were obliged to return home without effect.

A considerable fleet was equipped, some time after, to annoy the enemy by sea, and the command entrusted to sir Edward Howard; who, after scouring the Channel for some time, presented himself before Brest, where the French navy lay, and challenged them to combat. As the French were unequal to the enemy, they determined to wait for a reinforcement, which they expected under the command of Prejeant de Bidoux, from the Mediterranean. But in this the gallant Howard was resolved to disappoint them; and, upon the appearance of Prejeant with six gallies, who had time to take refuge behind some batteries, which were planted on the rocks that lay on each side him; he boldly rowed up with two gallies, followed by barges filled with officers of distinction. Upon coming up to Prejeant's ship, he immediately fastened upon it, and leaped on board, followed by one Carroz, a Spanish cavalier, and seventeen Englishmen. The cable, mean while, which fastened both ships together, was cut by the enemy, and the admiral was thus left in the hands of the French; but as he still continued to fight with great gallantry, he was pushed over board by their spikes, and perished in the sea. Upon his misfortune the fleet

fleet retired from before Brest, and the French navy, for a while, kept possession of the sea.

This slight repulse only served to inflame the king's ardour to take revenge upon the enemy; and he soon after sent a body of eight thousand men to Calais, under the command of the earl of Shrewsbury; and another body of six thousand followed shortly after, under the conduct of lord Herbert. He prepared to follow himself with the main body and rear, and arrived at Calais, attended by numbers of the English nobility. But he soon had an attendant, who did him still more honour. This was no less a personage than Maximilian, emperor of Germany, who had stipulated to assist him with eight thousand men; but being unable to perform his engagements, joined the English army with some German and Flemish soldiers, who were useful in giving an example of discipline to Henry's new levied soldiers. He even enlisted himself in the English service, wore the cross of St. George, and received pay, a hundred crowns a-day, as one of Henry's subjects and captains.

Henry being now at the head of a formidable army, fifty thousand strong, it was supposed that France must fall a victim to his ambition. But that kingdom was not threatened

by him alone ; the Swiss, on another quarter, with twenty-five thousand men, were preparing to invade it ; while Ferdinand of Arragon, whom no treaties could bind, was only waiting for a convenient opportunity of attack on his side to advantage. Never was the French monarchy in so distressed a situation ; but the errors of its assailants procured its safety. The Swiss entered into a treaty with Tremouille, the French general, who gave them their own terms, satisfied that his master would rescind them all, as not having given him any powers to treat ; Ferdinand continued to remain a quiet spectator, vainly waiting for some effectual blow to be struck by his allies ; and Henry spent his time in the siege of towns, which could neither secure his conquests, or advance his reputation.

The first of these were Terouenne, a little town situated on the frontiers of Picardy, which kept him employed for more than a month, although the garrison scarce amounted to a thousand men. The besieged, after some time, falling short of provisions, a very bold and desperate attempt was made to supply them, which was attended with success. A French captain, whose name was Fontrailes, led up a body of eighteen hundred men, each

of

of whom carried a bag of gunpowder, and two quarters of bacon behind him. With this small force he made a fierce and unexpected irruption into the English camp ; and surmounting all resistance, advanced to the ditch of the town, where each horseman threw down his burden. Then immediately returning upon the gallop, they were again so fortunate as to break through the English, without any great loss in the undertaking. But the party of horse that was sent to cover the retreat, was not so successful. Though this body of troops was commanded by the boldest and bravest captains of the French army, yet on sight of the English, they were seized with such an accountable panic, that they immediately fled, and had many of their best officers taken prisoners. This action was called by the French the battle of Guinegate, from the place where it was fought ; but by the English the battle of the Spurs, as the French, upon that day, made more use of their spurs than their swords, to procure safety.

After this victory, which might have been followed with very important consequences, had the victors marched forward to Paris, Henry sat down to make sure of the little town, which had made such an obstinate resistance ;

and found himself, when it was obliged to surrender, master of a place, which neither compensated the blood, nor the delay that were expended in the siege.

From one error Henry went on to another. He was persuaded to lay siege to Tournay, a great and rich city of Flanders, which at that time was in possession of the French. This siege, though it took up little time, yet served to retard the great object, which was the conquest of France ; and Henry hearing that the Swiss were returned home, and being elated with his trifling successes, resolved to transport his army back to England, where flattery was put to the torture, to make him happy in the glory of his ridiculous expedition. A truce was concluded soon after between the two kingdoms ; and Henry continued to dissipate, in more peaceful follies, those immense sums, which had been amassed by his predecessor for very different purposes.

The success which, during his foreign expedition, attended his arms in the North of England, was much more important and decisive. A war having been declared between the English and Scots, who ever took the opportunity to fall on, when their neighbours were embroiled with France, the king of that country

country summoned out the whole force of his kingdom ; and having passed the Tweed with a body of fifty thousand men, ravaged those parts of Northumberland which lay along the banks of that river. But as his forces were numerous and the country barren, he soon began to want provisions ; so that many of his men deserted, and returned to their native country. In the mean time, the earl of Surry, at the head of twenty-six thousand men, approached the Scots, who were encamped on a rising ground, near the hills of Cheviot. The river Till ran between both armies, and prevented an engagement ; wherefore the earl of Surry sent a herald to the Scots camp, challenging the enemy to descend into the plain, which lay to the south, and there to try their valour on equal ground. This offer not being accepted, he made a feint, as if he intended marching away towards Berwick, which putting the Scots in motion to annoy his rear, he took advantage of a great smoke, caused by the firing their huts, and passed the little river, which had hitherto prevented the engagement. Both armies now perceived that a combat was inevitable ; they prepared for the onset with great composure and regularity. The English divided their army into two lines;

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lord Howard led the main body of the first line ; sir Edmund Howard the right wing, and sir Marmaduke Constable the left ; the earl of Surry himself commanded the main body of the second line, assisted by lord Dacres, and sir Edward Stanley, to the right and the left. The Scots, on the other hand, presented three divisions to the enemy ; the middle commanded by the king himself, the right by the earl of Huntley, and the left by the earls of Lenox and Argyle ; a fourth division, under the earl of Bothwell, made a body of reserve. Lord Huntley began the onset, charging the division of lord Howard with such fury, that it was immediately put to confusion, and routed. But this division was so seasonably supported by lord Dacres, that the men rallied, and the battle became general. Both sides fought a long time with incredible impetuosity, until the Highlanders, being galled by the English artillery, broke in sword in hand upon the main body, commanded by the earl of Surry ; and at the head of these, James fought with the most forward of the nobility. They attacked with such velocity, that the hinder line could not advance in time to sustain them, so that a body of English intercepted their retreat. James being thus almost

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surrounded by the enemy, refused to quit the field, while it was yet in his power ; but, alighting from his horse, formed his little body into an orb, and in this posture fought with such desperate courage, as restored the battle. The English therefore were again obliged to have recourse to their artillery and arrows, which made a terrible havock ; but night separating the combatants, it was not till the day following that lord Howard perceived that he had gained a great and glorious victory. The English had lost no persons of note, but the whole flower of the Scots nobility were fallen in battle. Ten thousand of the common men were cut off, and a body, supposed to be that of the king, was sent to London, where it remained unburied, as a sentence of excommunication still remained against James, for having leagued with France against the Holy See. But upon Henry's application, who pretended that that prince in the instant before his death had discovered some signs of repentance, absolution was given him, and the body was interred. However the populace of Scotland still continued to think their king alive ; and it was given out among them that he had secretly gone on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

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These successes only served to intoxicate Henry still the more ; and while his pleasure, on the one hand, engrossed his time, the preparations for repeated expeditions exhausted his treasures. As it was natural to suppose the old ministers, who were appointed to direct him by his father, would not willingly concur in these idle projects, Henry had, for some time, discontinued asking their advice, and chiefly confided in the counsels of Thomas, afterwards cardinal Wolsey, who seemed to second him in his favourite pursuits. Wolsey was a minister who complied with all his master's inclinations, and flattered him in every scheme to which his sanguine and impetuous temper was inclined. He was the son of a private gentleman, and not of a butcher, as is commonly reported, of Ipswich. He was sent to Oxford so early, that he was a bachelor at fourteen, and at that time was called the boy bachelor. He rose by degrees, upon quitting college, from one preferment to another, till he was made rector of Lymington by the marquis of Dorset, whose children he had instructed. He had not long resided at this living, when one the justices of the peace put him in the stocks for being drunk, and raising disturbances at a neighbouring fair.

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This disgrace, however, did not retard his promotion ; for he was recommended as chaplain to Henry the Seventh ; and being employed by that monarch in a secret negotiation respecting his intended marriage with Margaret of Savoy, he acquitted himself to that king's satisfaction, and obtained the praise both of diligence and dexterity. That prince having given him a commission to Maximilian, who at that time resided at Brussels, was surprised in less than three days after to see Wolsey present himself before him ; and, supposing that he had been delinquent, began to reprove his delay. Wolsey, however, surprised him with assurance that he was just returned from Brussels, and had successfully fulfilled all his majesty's commands. His dispatch on that occasion procured him the deanery of Lincoln, and in this situation it was that he was introduced by Fox, bishop of Winchester, to the young king's notice, in hopes that he would have talents to supplant the earl of Surry, who was favourite at that time ; and in this Fox was not out in his conjectures. Presently after being introduced at court, he was made a privy-counsellor ; and as such, had frequent opportunities of ingratiating himself with the young king, as he appeared at once complying,

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submissive, and enterprising. Wolsey used every art to suit himself to the royal temper ; he sung, laughed, and danced with every libertine of the court ; neither his own years, which were near forty, nor his character of a clergyman, were any restraint upon him, or tended to check, by ill-timed severities, the gaiety of his companions. To such a weak and vicious monarch as Henry, qualities of this nature were highly pleasing ; and Wolsey was soon acknowledged as his chief favourite, and to him were entrusted the chief administration of affairs. The people began to see with indignation the new favourite's mean confessions to the king, and his arrogance to themselves. They had long regarded the vicious haughtiness, and the unbecoming splendour of the clergy, with envy and detestation ; and Wolsey's greatness served to bring a new odium upon that body, already too much the object of the people's dislike. His character being now placed in a more conspicuous point of light, daily began to manifest itself the more. Insatiable in his acquisitions, but still more magnificent in his expence ; of extensive capacity, but still more unbounded in enterprize ; ambitious of power, but still more desirous of glory ; insinuating, engaging, persuasive, and

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at other times lofty, elevated, and commanding; haughty to his equals, but affable to his dependents; oppressive to the people, but liberal to his friends; more generous than grateful; formed to take the ascendant in every intercourse, but vain enough not to cover his real superiority.

He had been advanced soon to the bishoprick of Lincoln; but this he afterwards resigned, upon being promoted to the archbishoprick of York. Upon the capture of Tournay, he had been promoted to the see of that place; but besides, he got possession at very low leases of the revenues of Bath, Worcester, and Hereford, bishopricks filled by Italians, who were allowed to reside abroad, and who were glad to compound for this indulgence, but parting with a considerable share of their profits. Besides many other church preferments, he was allowed to unite with the see of York, first that of Durham, next that of Winchester; and his appetite seemed to increase, by the means that were taken to satisfy it. The pope, observing his great influence over the king, was desirous of engaging him in his interests, and created him a cardinal. His train consisted of eight hundred servants, of whom many were knights and gentlemen. Some, even of the nobility, put

put their children into his family as a place of education ; and whoever was distinguished by any art or science, paid court to the cardinal, and were often liberally rewarded. He was the first clergyman in England who wore silk and gold, not only on his habit, but also on his saddles and the trappings of his horses.

Besides these various distinctions the pope soon after conferred upon him that of legate, designing thus to make him instrumental in draining the kingdom of money, upon pretence of employing it in a war against the Turks, but in reality with a view to fill his own coffers. In this he so well served the court of Rome, that some time after the post of legate was conferred upon him for life ; and he now united in his person the promotions of legate, cardinal, archbishop, and prime minister.

Soon after, Warham, chancellor, and archbishop of Canterbury, a man of a very moderate temper, chose rather to retire from public employment than maintain an unequal contest with the haughty cardinal. Wolsey instantly seized on the chancellorship, and exercised the duties of that employment with great abilities and impartiality. The duke of Norfolk finding the king's treasures exhausted, and his taste for expence still continuing, was

glad to resign his office of treasurer, and retire from court. Fox, bishop of Winchester, who had first been instrumental in Wolsey's rise, withdrew himself in disgust; the duke of Suffolk also went home with a resolution to remain private, whilst Wolsey availed himself of their discontents, and filled up their places by his creatures, or his personal affiduity. These were vast stretches of power; and yet the churchman was still insatiable. He procured a bull from the pope, empowering him to make knights and counts, to legitimate bastards, to give degrees in arts, law, physic, and divinity; and to grant all sorts of dispensations. So much pride and power could not avoid giving high offence to the nobility, yet none dared vent their indignation, so greatly were they in terror of his vindictive temper.

In order to divert their envy from his inordinate exaltation, he soon entered into a correspondence with Francis the First, of France, who had taken many methods to work upon his vanity, and at last succeeded. In consequence of that monarch's wishes, Henry was persuaded by the cardinal to deliver up Tournay once more to the French; and he also agreed to an interview with that monarch. This expensive congress was held between

Guisnes and Ardres, near Calais; within the English pale, in compliment to Henry for crossing the sea. The two monarchs, after saluting each other in the most cordial manner, retired into a tent erected for the purpose, where Henry proceeded to read the articles of their intended alliance. As he began to read the first words of it, "I, Henry, king," he stopt a moment; and then subjoined only "of England," without adding France, the usual style of English monarchs. Francis remarked this delicacy, and expressed his approbation by a smile. Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the nobility of both courts on this occasion. Many of them involved themselves in large debts; and the penury of a life was scarce sufficient to reimburse the extravagance of a few days. Beside, there at first appeared something low and illiberal in the mutual distrusts that were conspicuous on this occasion; the two kings never met without having the number of their guards counted on both sides; every step was carefully adjusted; they passed each other in the middle point between both places, when they went to visit their queens; and at the same instant that Henry entered Ardres, Francis put himself into the hands of the English at Guisnes. But Francis, who is considered

considered as the first restorer of true politeness into Europe, put an end to this low and illiberal method of conversing. Taking one day with him two gentlemen and a page, he rode directly into Guisnes, crying out to the English guards, that they were their prisoners, and desiring to be carried to their master. Henry was not a little astonished at the appearance of Francis; and taking him in his arms, “ My brother, said he, you have here given “ me the most agreeable surprize; you have “ shewn me the full confidence I may place “ in you; I surrender myself your prisoner “ from this moment.” He then took from his neck a collar of pearls of great value, and putting it on Francis, begged him to wear it for the sake of his prisoner. Francis agreed; and giving him a bracelet of double the value of the former, insisted on his wearing it in turn. Henry went the next day to Ardres, without guards or attendants; and confidence being now sufficiently established between these monarchs, they employed the rest of the time in feasts and tournaments.

Some months before a defiance had been sent by the two kings to each other's court, and through all the chief cities of Europe, importing, that Henry and Francis, with four-

A.D. 1520.

teen aids, would be ready in the plains of Picardy to answer all comers that were gentlemen, at tilt and tourney. Accordingly, the monarchs, now all gorgeously apparelled, entered the lists on horseback, Francis surrounded with Henry's guards, and Henry with those of Francis. They were both at that time the most comely personages of their age, and prided themselves on their expertness in the military exercises. The ladies were the judges in these feats of chivalry; and they put an end to the encounter whenever they thought proper. It is supposed that the crafty French monarch was willing to gratify Henry's vanity by allowing him to enjoy a petty pre-eminence in these pastimes. He ran a tilt against Monsieur Grandeval, whom he disabled at the second encounter. He engaged Monsieur de Montmorency, whom, however, he could not throw from the saddle. He fought at faulchion with a French nobleman, who presented him with his courser, in token of submission.

But these empty splendours were not sufficient to appease the jealousy of the nobles at home, or quiet the murmurs of the people. Among these, the duke of Buckingham, the son of him who lost his life in the reign of Richard the Third, was the foremost to com-

plain. He had often been heard to treat the cardinals's pride and profusion with just contempt; and carrying his resentment perhaps to an improper length, some low informers took care that Wolsey should be apprized of all. The substance of his impeachment was, that he had consulted a fortune-teller concerning his succession to the crown, and had affected to make himself popular. This was but a weak pretext to take away the life of a nobleman, whose father had died in defence of the late king; but he was brought to a trial, and the duke of Norfolk, whose son had married his daughter, was created lord steward, to preside at this solemn procedure. He was condemned to die, as a traitor, by a jury, consisting of a duke, a marquis, seven earls, and twelve barons. When the sentence was pronouncing against him, and the high steward came to mention the word traitor, the unhappy prisoner could not contain his indignation.
“ My lords, cried he to the judges, I am no
“ traitor; and for what you have now done
“ against me, take my sincere forgiveness; as
“ for my life, I think it not worth petitioning
“ for; may God forgive you, and pity me.”
He was soon after executed on Tower-hill.

By this time, all the immense treasures of the late king were quite exhausted on empty pageants, guilty pleasures, or vain treaties and expeditions. But the king relied on Wolsey alone for replenishing his coffers ; and no person could be fitter for the purpose. His first care was to get a large sum of money from the people, under the title of a benevolence, which, added to its being extorted, the mortification of being considered as a free gift. Henry little minded the manner of its being raised, provided he had the enjoyment of it ; however, his minister met with some opposition in his attempts to levy these extorted contributions. In the first place, having exacted a considerable subsidy from the clergy, he next addressed himself to the house of commons ; but they only granted him half the supplies he demanded. Wolsey was at first highly offended at their parsimony, and desired to be heard in the house ; but as this would have destroyed the very form and constitution of that august body, they replied, that none could be permitted to sit and argue there, but such as had been elected members. This was the first attempt made in this reign, to render the king master of the debates in parliament. Wolsey first paved the way ; and unfortunately

ly for the kingdom, Henry too well improved upon his plans soon after.

A treaty with France, which threatened to make a breach with the emperor, induced Henry to wish for new supplies, or at least he made this the pretext of his demands. But as the parliament had testified their reluctance to indulge his wishes, he followed the advice of Wolsey, and resolved to make use of his prerogative alone for that purpose. He issued out commissions to all the counties of England for levying four shillings in the pound upon the clergy, and three shillings and four pence from the laity; nor did he attempt to cover the violence of the measure, by giving it the name either of benevolence or loan. This unwarrantable stretch of royal power was quickly opposed by the people; they were unwilling to submit to impositions unknown till now; and a general insurrection threatened to ensue. Henry had the prudence to stop short in that dangerous path into which he had entered; and declared, by circular letters to all the counties, that what was demanded was only by way of benevolence. But the spirit of opposition, once roused, was not so easily quieted; the citizens of London hesitated on the demand; and in some parts of the country insurrections

rections were actually begun, which were suppressed by the duke of Suffolk. These imposts, which were first advised by Wolsey, not happily succeeding, he began to lose a little of his favour with the king; and this displeasure was still more increased by the complaints of the clergy, who accused him of extortion. Henry reproved Wolsey, in severe terms, which rendered him more cautious and artful for the future. As an instance of his cunning, having built a noble palace, called York-place, at Westminster, for his own use, fearing now the general censure against him, he made a present of it to the king, assuring him, that from the first he intended it as an offer to his majesty. Thus Wolsey's impunity only served to pave the way to greater extortions. The pride of this prelate was great; but his riches were still greater. In order to have a pretext for amassing such sums, he undertook to found two new colleges in Oxford, for which he received every day fresh grants from the pope and the king. To execute this favourite scheme, he obtained a liberty of suppressing several monasteries, and converting their revenues to the benefit of his new foundation. Whatever might have been the pope's inducement to grant him these privileges, nothing

thing could be more fatal to the pontiff's interests; for Henry was thus himself taught shortly afterwards to imitate, what he had seen a subject perform with impunity.

Hitherto the administration of all affairs was carried on by Wolsey; for the king was contented to lose, in the embraces of his mistresses, all the complaints of his subjects; and the cardinal undertook to keep him ignorant, in order to continue his own uncontrolled authority. But now a period was approaching, that was to put an end to this minister's exorbitant power. One of the most extraordinary and important revolutions that ever employed the attention of man, was now ripe for execution. This was no less a change than the Reformation; to have an idea of the rise of which, it will be proper to take a cursory view of the state of the church at that time, and to observe by what seemingly contradictory means Providence produces the most happy events.

The church of Rome had now, for more than a thousand years, been corrupting the ancient simplicity of the gospel, and converting into a temporality the kingdom of another world. The popes had been frequently seen at the head of their own armies, fighting for their

their dominions with the arm of flesh, and forgetting in cruelty and detestable maxims of state, all the pretended sanctity of their characters. The cardinals, prelates, and dignitaries of the church, lived in envied splendour, were served like voluptuous princes, and some of them were found to possess eight or nine bishopricks at once. Wherever the church governed, it exerted that power with cruelty; so that to their luxuries were usually added the crime of tyranny too. As for the inferior clergy, both popish and protestant writers exclaim against their abandoned and dissolute morals. They publicly kept mistresses, and bequeathed to their illegitimate children whatever they were able to save from their pleasures, or extort from the poor. There is still to be seen a will made by a bishop of Cambray, in which he sets aside a certain sum for the bastards he has had already, and those which, by the blessing of God, he may yet happen to have. In many parts of England and Germany, the people obliged their priests to have concubines; so that the laity might preserve their wives with greater security; while, at the same time, the poor laborious peasant and artizan saw all the fruits of their toil go, not to clothe and maintain their own little families,

smiles, but to pamper men, who insulted them with lectures, to which their example appeared a flat contradiction. But the vices of the clergy were not greater than their ignorance; few of them knew the meaning of their Latin mass. Their sagacity was chiefly employed in finding out witches, and exorcising the possessed; but what most increased the hatred of the people against them was the selling pardons and absolutions for sin, at certain stated prices. A deacon, or subdeacon, who committed murder, was absolved from his crime, and allowed to possess three benefices upon paying twenty crowns. A bishop or abbot might commit murder for about ten pounds of our money. Every crime had its stated value; and absolutions were given for sins not only already committed, but such as should be committed hereafter. The wisest of the people looked with silent detestation on these impositions; and the ignorant themselves, whom fortune seemed to have formed for slavery, began to open their eyes to such glaring absurdities.

These vices and impositions were now almost come to a head; and the increase of arts and learning among the laity, propagated by means of printing, which had been lately invented,

A. D. 1519. vented, began to make them resist that power, which was originally founded in deceit. Leo the Tenth was at that time pope, and eagerly employed in building the church of St. Peter, at Rome. In order to procure money for carrying on that expensive undertaking, he gave a commission for selling indulgencies, a practice that had been often tried before. These were to free the purchaser from the pains of purgatory; and they would serve even for one's friends, if purchased with that intention. There were every where shops opened, where they were to be sold; but in general they were to be had at taverns, brothels, and gaming houses. The Augustine friars had usually been employed in Saxony to preach the indulgencies, and from this trust had derived both profit and consideration; but the pope's minister supposing that they had found out illicit methods of secreting the money, transferred this lucrative employment from them to the Dominicans. Martin Luther, professor in the university of Wirtemberg, was an Augustine monk, and one of those who resented this transfer of the sale of indulgencies from one order to another. He began to shew his indignation by preaching against their efficacy; and being naturally of a fiery temper, and provoked

provoked by opposition, he inveighed against the authority of the pope himself. Being driven hard by his adversaries still as he enlarged his reading, in order to support his tenets, he discovered some new abuse or error in the church of Rome. The people, who had long groaned under the papal tyranny, heard his discourses with pleasure, and defended him against the authority and machinations of his enemies. Frederic, elector of Saxony, surnamed the Wise, openly protected him; the republic of Zurich even reformed their church according to the new model; and Luther, a man naturally inflexible and vehement, was become incapable, either from promises of advancement, or terrors of severity, to relinquish a sect, of which he was himself the founder. It was in vain, therefore, that the pope issued out his bulls against Luther; it was in vain that the Dominican friars procured his books to be burned; he boldly abused the Dominicans, and burned the pope's bull in the streets of Wirtemberg. In the mean time, the dispute was carried on by writing on either side. Luther, though opposed by the pope, the conclave, and all the clergy, supported his cause singly and with success. As the controversy was new, his ignorance of many

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parts of the subject was not greater than theirs ; and ill as he wrote, they answered still worse. Opinions are inculcated upon the minds of mankind rather by confidence and perseverance, than by strength of reasoning, or beauty of diction ; and no man had more confidence or more perseverance than he. In this dispute, it was the fate of Henry to be a champion on both sides. His father, who had given him the education of a scholar, permitted him to be instructed in school-divinity, which then was the principal object of learned enquiry. Henry, therefore, willing to convince the world of his abilities in that science, obtained the pope's permission to read the works of Luther, which had been forbidden, under pain of excommunication. In consequence of this, the king defended the seven sacraments, out of St. Thomas Aquinas ; and shewed some dexterity in this science, though it is thought that Wolsey had the chief hand in directing him. A book being thus finished in haste, it was sent to Rome for the pope's approbation, which it is natural to suppose would not be withheld. The pontiff, ravished with its eloquence and depth, compared it to the labours of St. Jerome or St. Augustine ; and rewarded the author with the title of Defender of the Faith,

Faith, little imagining that Henry was soon to be one of the most terrible enemies that ever the church of Rome had to contend with.

Besides these causes, which contributed to render the Romish church odious and contemptible, there were still others, proceeding from political measures. Clement the Seventh had succeeded Leo, and the hereditary animosity between the emperor and the pope breaking out into a war, Clement was imprisoned in the castle of St. Angelo ; and, with thirteen cardinals, his adherents, kept in custody for his ransom. As the demands of the emperor were exorbitant, Henry undertook to negotiate for the pope, and was procuring him a very favourably treaty ; but his holiness, in the mean time, corrupting his guards, had the good fortune to procure his escape from confinement ; and leaving the treaty unfinished, sent Henry a letter of thanks for his mediation. The violence of the emperor, taught Henry that popes might be injured with impunity ; and the behaviour of the pope manifested but little of that sanctity or infallibility to which the pontiffs pretended. Besides, as Henry had laid the pope thus under obligations, he supposed that he might, upon any emergency, expect a grateful return.

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A. D. 1527. It was in this situation of the church and the pope, that a new scene was going to be opened, which was to produce endless disturbances, and to change the whole system of Europe. Henry had now been eighteen years married to Catharine of Arragon, who, as we have related, had been brought over from Spain to marry his elder brother, who died a few months after cohabitation. But, notwithstanding the submissive deference paid to the indulgence of the church, Henry's marriage with this princess did not pass without scruple and hesitation. The prejudices of the people were in general bent against a conjugal union between such near relations; and the late king, though he had solemnized the espousals, when his son was but twelve years of age, gave many intimations that he intended to annul them at a proper opportunity. These intentions might have given Henry some doubts and scruples concerning the legitimacy of his marriage; but as he had three children by the princess, and as her character and conduct were blameless, he for a while kept his suggestions private. But she was six years older than him; and the decay of her beauty, together with particular infirmities and diseases, had contributed to make him desirous of another consort. However,

ever, though he felt a secret dislike to her person, yet for a long time he broke out into no flagrant act of contempt; contented to range from beauty to beauty among the ladies of his court, and his rank always procuring him a ready compliance. But Henry was carried forward, though perhaps not at first excited, by a motive much more powerful than the tacit suggestions of his conscience. It happened that among the maids of honour, then attending the queen, there was one Anna Bullen, the daughter of sir Thomas Büllen, a gentleman of distinction, and related to most of the nobility. He had been employed by the king in several embassies, and was married to a daughter of the duke of Norfolk. The beauty of Anne surpassed whatever had hitherto appeared at this voluptuous court; and her education, which had been at Paris, tended to set off her personal charms. Her features were regular, mild, and attractive; her stature elegant, though below the middle size, while her wit and vivacity exceeded even her other allurements. Henry, who had never learned the art of restraining any passion that he desired to gratify, saw and loved her; but after several efforts to induce her to comply with his criminal desires, he found that with-

out marriage, he could have no chance of succeeding. This obstacle, therefore, he hardily undertook to remove; and as his own queen was now become hateful to him, in order to procure a divorce, he alledged that his conscience rebuked him for having so long lived in incest with the wife of his brother. In this pretended perplexity, therefore, he applied to Clement the Seventh, who owed him many obligations, desiring to dissolve the bull of the former pope, which had given him permission to marry Catharine; and to declare that it was not in the power, even of the holy see, to dispense with a law so strictly enjoined in scripture. The unfortunate pope was now in the utmost perplexity; queen Catharine was aunt to the emperor, who had lately made him a prisoner, and whose resentment he dreaded to rekindle by thus injuring so near a relation: beside, he could not in prudence declare the bull of the former pope illicit, for this would be giving a blow to the doctrine of papal infallibility. On the other hand, Henry was his protector and friend, the dominions of England were the chief resource from whence his finances were supplied, and the king of France, some time before, had got a bull of divorce in somewhat similar circumstances. In

this exigence, he thought the wisest method would be to spin out the affair by a negotiation ; and in the mean time sent over a commission to Wolsey; in conjunction with the archbishop of Canterbury, or any other English prelate, to examine the validity of the king's marriage, and the former dispensation ; granting them also a provisional dispensation for the king's marriage with any other person. When this message was laid before the council in England, they prudently considered that an advice given by the pope in this secret manner, might very easily be disavowed in public : and that a clandestine marriage would totally invalidate the legitimacy of any issue the king should have by such a match. In consequence of this, fresh messengers were dispatched to Rome, and evasive answers returned, the pope still continuing to promise, recant, dispute, and temporise ; hoping that the king's passion would never hold out during the tedious course of an ecclesiastical controversy. In this he was entirely mistaken. Henry had been long taught to dispute as well as he, and quickly found, or wrested, many texts of scripture to favour his opinions or his passions. To his arguments he added threats, assuring the pope, that the English were already but too

well disposed to withdraw from the holy see; and that if he continued uncomplying, the whole country would readily follow the example of a monarch, who, stung by ingratitude, should deny all obedience to a pontiff by whom he had always been treated with falsehood and duplicity. The king even proposed to his holiness, whether in case he were not permitted to put away his present queen, he might not have a dispensation for having two wives at a time.

The pope, perceiving the eagerness of the king, at one time had thoughts of complying with his solicitations, and sent cardinal Campegio, his legate, to London, who, with Wolsey, opened a court for trying the legitimacy of the king's present marriage, and cited the king and the queen to appear before them. They both presented themselves; and the king answered to his name when called; but the queen, instead of answering to her's, rose from her seat, A.D. 1522. and throwing herself at the king's feet, in the most pathetic manner, entreated him to have pity upon her helpless situation. A stranger, unprotected, unfriended, she could only rely on him as her guardian and defender, on him alone who knew her submission, and her innocence, and not upon any court, in which her enemies

mies prevailed, and would wrest the laws against her ; she therefore refused the present trial, where she could expect neither justice nor impartiality. Yet notwithstanding the queen's objections, her trial went forward ; and Henry shortly hoped to be gratified in his most sanguine expectations. The principal point which came before the legates, was the proof of prince Arthur's consummation of his marriage with Catharine, which some of his own expressions to that purpose tended to confirm. Other topics were preparing, tending to prove the inability of the pope himself to grant such a dispensation ; and the business seemed now to be drawing near a period, when, to the great surprise of all, Campegio, all of a sudden, without any warning, and upon very frivolous pretences, prorogued the court ; and shortly after transferred the cause before the court of Rome.

During the course of these perplexing negotiations, on the issue of which Henry's happiness seemed to depend, he had at first expected to find in his favourite Wolsey, a warm defender, and a steady adherent ; but in this he found himself mistaken. Wolsey seemed to be in pretty much the same dilemma with the pope. On the one hand, he was to please his

master the king, from whom he had received a thousand marks of favour ; and on the other hand, he feared to disoblige the pope, whose servant he more immediately was, and who besides had power to punish his disobedience. He, therefore, resolved to continue neuter in this controversy ; and though of all men the most haughty, he gave way on this occasion to his colleague Campegio in all things, pretending a deference to his skill in canon law. Wolsey's scheme of temporizing was highly displeasing to the king ; but for a while he endeavoured to stifle his resentment, until it could act with more fatal certainty. He for some time looked out for a man of equal abilities and less art ; and it was not long before accident threw into his way one Thomas Cranmer, of greater talents, and probably of more integrity. Cranmer was a doctor of divinity, and a professor at Cambridge, but had lost his office upon marrying contrary to the institutes of the canon law, which enjoined celibacy to all the clergy. He had travelled in his youth into Germany ; and it was there he became acquainted with Luther's works, and embraced his doctrines. This man happening to fall one evening into company with Gardiner secretary of state, and Fox the king's almoner,

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the business of the divorce became the subject of conversation. He gave it as his opinion, that the readiest way to quiet the king's conscience, or to extort the pope's consent, would be to consult all the universities of Europe upon the affair; an advice which being brought to the king, pleased him so much, that Cranmer was desired to follow the court.

The king finding himself provided with a person who could supply Wolsey's place, appeared less reserved in his resentments against that prelate. The attorney-general was ordered to prepare a bill of indictment against him; and he was soon after commanded to resign the great seal. Crimes are easily found against a favourite in disgrace, and the courtiers did not fail to encrease the catalogue of his errors. He was ordered to depart from York-place palace; and all his furniture and plate were converted to the king's use. The inventory of his goods being taken, they were found to exceed even the most extravagant surmises. Of fine Holland alone there were found a thousand pieces; the walls of his palace were covered with cloth of gold and silver; he had a cup-board of plate of massy gold; all the rest of his riches and furniture were in proportion, and probably their greatness

ness invited the hand of power. The parliament soon after confirmed the sentence of the court of Star-chamber against him, and he was ordered to retire to Esher, a country seat which he possessed near Hampton; there to await the king's further pleasure, with all the fluctuations of hope and apprehension. Still, however, he was in possession of the archbishopric of York and bishopric of Winchester; and the king gave him distant gleams of hope, by sending him a ring, accompanied with a gracious message. Wolsey, who, like every bad character, was proud to his equals and mean to those above him, happening to meet the king's messenger on horseback, immediately alighted, and throwing himself on his knees in the mire, received, in that abject manner, those marks of his majesty's condescension. But his hopes were soon overturned; for after he had remained some time at Esher, he was ordered to remove to his see of York; where he took up his residence at Cawood, and rendered himself very popular in the neighbourhood by his affability. He was not allowed to remain long unmolested in this retreat. He was arrested by the earl of Northumberland, at the king's command, for high treason; and preparations were made for conducting him to London, in order

order to his trial. He at first refused to comply with the requisition, as being a cardinal; but finding the earl bent on performing his commission, he complied, and set out, by easy journeys, for London, to appear as a criminal, where he had acted as a king. In his way he stayed a fortnight at the earl of Shrewsbury's; where, one day at dinner, he was taken ill, not without violent suspicions of having poisoned himself. Being brought forward from thence, he with much difficulty reached Leicester abbey; where the monks coming out to meet him, he said, "Father Abbot, I am come to lay my bones among you;" and immediately ordered his bed to be prepared. As his disorder increased, an officer being placed near, at once to guard and attend him, he spoke to him, a little before he expired, to this effect: "I pray you have me heartily recommended unto his royal majesty; he is a prince of a most royal carriage, and hath a princely heart, and rather than he will mis, or want any part of his will, he will endanger one half of his kingdom. I do assure you, I have kneeled before him, for three hours together, to persuade him from his will and appetite, but could not prevail. Had I but served God as diligently as I have served the king,

king, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs. But this is the just reward, that I must receiye for my indulgent pains and study, not regarding my service to God, but only to my prince." He died soon after, in all the pangs of remorse, and left a life which he had all along rendered turbid by ambition, and wretched by mean assiduities. He left two natural children behind him, one of whom, being a priest, was loaded with church preferments.

Henry being now freed from the controul of a person, who had for some time been an obstacle to his intentions, by Cranmer's advice, he had the legality of his present marriage canvassed in all the most noted universities of Europe. It was very extraordinary to see the king on one side soliciting the universities to be favourable to his passion; and, on the other, the emperor pressing them with equal ardour to be favourable to his aunt. Henry liberally rewarded those doctors who declared on his side; and the emperor granted benefices to such as voted in conformity to his wishes. Time has discovered these intrigues. In one of Henry's account books, we find the disbursements he made on these occasions. To a sub,

sub-deacon he gave a crown, to a deacon two crowns; and so of the rest, in proportion to the consequence of the station or opinion. The person, however, who bribed on these occasions, excused himself, by declaring, that he never paid the money till after the vote was given. In this contest, the liberalities, and consequently the votes of Henry, prevailed; his intrigues for a favourable decision being better carried on, as he was most interested in the debate. All the colleges of Italy and France unanimously declared his present marriage against all law divine and human; and therefore alledged, that it was not in the power of the pope himself to grant a dispensation. The only places where this decision was most warmly opposed, were at Oxford and Cambridge; but they also concurred in the same opinion at last, having furnished out the formality of a debate. But the agents of Henry were not content with the suffrage of the universities alone; the opinions of the Jewish Rabbis were also demanded; however, their suffrages were easily bought up.

Henry being thus fortified by the suffrages of the universities, was now resolved to oppose even the pope himself, and began in parliament by reviving an old law against the clergy,

clergy, by which it was decreed, that all those who had submitted to the legatine authority, had incurred severe penalties. The clergy, to conciliate the king's favour, were compelled to pay a fine of an hundred and eighteen thousand pounds. A confession was likewise extorted from them, that the king was protector and supreme head of the church and the clergy of England. By these concessions a great part of the profits, and still more of the power, of the church of Rome, was cut off. An act soon after was passed against levying the first fruits, or a year's rent, of all the bishoprics that fell vacant. The tie that held Henry to the church being thus broken, he resolved to keep no further measures with the pontiff. He therefore privately married Anne Bullen, whom he had created marchioness of Pembroke; the duke of Norfolk, uncle to the new queen, her father, mother, and doctor Cranmer, being present at the ceremony. Soon after finding the queen pregnant, he publicly owned his marriage, and, to colour over his disobedience to the pope with an appearance of triumph, he passed with his beautiful bride through London, with a magnificence greater than had been ever known before. The streets

were strewed, the walls of the houses were hung with tapestries, the conduits run with wine, and an universal joy was diffused among the people, who were contented rather with the present festivity, than solicitous to examine the motives of it. Catharine, who had all along supported her claims with resolution, and yet with modesty, was cited to a trial ; but refusing to appear, she was pronounced contumacious, and judgment given against the validity of her marriage with the king. At length, therefore, finding the inutility of further resistance, she retired to Ampthill, near Dunstable, where she continued the rest of her life in privacy and peace.

In the mean time, when this intelligence was conveyed to Rome, the conclave was in a rage ; and the pope, incited by their ardour, and frightened also by the menaces of the emperor, published a sentence, declaring queen Catharine alone to be Henry's lawful wife ; and requiring him to take her again, with a denunciation of censures, in case of refusal. On the other hand, Henry finding that his subjects of all ranks had taken part with him, and had willingly complied with his attempts to break a foreign dependence, resolved no longer

ger to renew these submissions which no power could extort. The people had been prepared by degrees for this great innovation : care had been taken for some years to inculcate the doctrine, that the pope was entitled to no authority beyond the limits of his own diocese. The king, therefore, no longer delayed his meditated scheme of separating entirely from the church of Rome. The parliament was at his devotion ; the majority of the clergy was for him, as they had already declared against the pope, by decreeing in favour of the divorce ; and the people, above all, wished to see the church humbled, which had so long controlled them at pleasure, and grown opulent by their labours and distresses. Thus all things conspiring to co-operate with his designs, he at once ordered himself to be declared by his clergy the supreme head of the church ; the parliament confirmed the title, abolished all authority of the pope in England, voted all tributes, formerly paid to the holy see, as illegal, and entrusted the king with the collation to all ecclesiastical benefices. The nation came into the king's measures with joy, and took an oath, called the oath of supremacy ; all the credit of the pope, that had subsisted

A.D. 1534.

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for ages, was now at once overthrown, and none seemed to repine at the revolution, except those who were immediately interested by their dependence on the court of Rome.

But though Henry had thus separated from the church, yet he had not addicted himself to the system of any other reformer. The idea of heresy still appeared detestable, as well as formidable, to him ; and whilst his resentment against the see of Rome had removed one part of his early prejudices, he made it a point never to relinquish the rest. Separate as he stood from the catholic church, and from the Roman pontiff, the head of it, he still valued himself on maintaining the catholic doctrines, and on guarding by fire and sword the imagined purity of its establishments. His ministers and courtiers were of as motley a character as his conduct, and seemed to waver, during the whole reign, between the ancient and the new religion. The young queen, engaged by interest, as well as inclination, favoured the cause of the reformers ; Thomas Cromwell, who, from being a creature of Wolsey, and who, by an admirable defence of the conduct of his old master, had been taken into the favour and confidence of the king, embraced

braced the same views. Being a man of prudence and ability, he was very successful in promoting the reformation, though in a concealed manner. Cranmer, who was now become archbishop of Canterbury, had all along adopted the protestant tenets, and had gained Henry's friendship by his candour and sincerity. On the other hand, the duke of Norfolk adhered to the old mode of worship; and by the greatness of his rank, as well as by his talents for peace and war, he had great weight in the king's council. Gardiner, lately created bishop of Winchester, had enlisted himself in the same party; and the suppleness of his character, and the dexterity of his conduct, had rendered him extremely useful to it. The king, mean while, who held the balance between these contending factions, was enabled by the courtship paid him by both protestants and catholics, to assume an immeasurable authority.

As the mode of religion was not as yet known, and as the minds of those who were of opposite sentiments were extremely exasperated, it naturally followed that several must fall a sacrifice in the contest between ancient establishments, and modern reformation. The

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reformers were the first who were exhibited as unhappy examples of the vindictive fury of those who were for the continuance of ancient superstitions. One James Bainham, a gentleman of the Temple, being accused of favouring the doctrines of Luther, had been brought before sir Thomas More during his chancellorship ; and, after being put to the torture, was condemned as a relapsed heretic, and was burned in Smithfield. One Thomas Bilney, a priest, had embraced the new doctrine ; but being terrified into an abjuration, he was so stung with remorse, that he went into Norfolk, publicly recanting his former conduct, and exposing the errors of popery. He was soon seized, tried in the bishop's court, condemned as a relapsed heretic, and burnt accordingly. On the other hand, Henry was not remiss in punishing such as disowned the propriety of his late defection from Rome ; and the monks, as they suffered most by the reformation, so they were most obnoxious, from their free manner of speaking, to the royal resentment.

To assist him in bringing these to punishment, the parliament had made it capital to deny his supremacy over the church ; and many priors and ecclesiastics lost their lives for this

new species of crime. But of those who fell a sacrifice to this stern and unjust law, none are so much to be regretted as John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and the celebrated sir Thomas More. Fisher was a prelate eminent for his learning and morals ; but so firmly attached to ancient opinions, that he was thrown into prison, and deprived of his ecclesiastical revenues ; so that he had scarce even rags to cover him in his severe confinement. He was soon after indicted for denying the king's supremacy, condemned and beheaded.

Sir Thomas More is entitled to still greater pity, as his merits were greater. This extraordinary man, who was one of the revivers of ancient literature, and incontestably the foremost writer of his age, had, for some time, refused to act in subserviency to the capricious passions of the king. He had been created chancellor ; but gave up that high office, rather than concur in the breach with the church of Rome. The austerity of this man's virtue, and the sanctity of his manners, had in no wise encroached on the gentleness of his temper ; but even in the midst of poverty and disgrace, he could preserve that natural gaiety, which was probably inspired by conscious innocence. But on the present occasion, being put into confine-

confinement, no entreaties nor arguments could prevail with him to speak an entire acknowledgment of the justice of the king's claims. One Rich, who was then solicitor-general, was sent to confer with him ; and in his presence he was inveigled to say, that any question with regard to the law, which established that prerogative, was like a two-edged sword. If a person answered one way, it would confound his soul : if another, it would destroy his body. These words were sufficient for the base informer to hang an accusation upon ; and as trials at that time were but mere formalities, the jury gave sentence against More, who long expected his fate. His natural cheerfulness attended him to the last. When he was mounting the scaffold, he said to one, “ Friend help me up ; and when I go down again, let me shift for myself.” The executioner asking him forgiveness, he granted the request, but told him, “ You will never get credit by beheading me, my neck is so short.” Then laying his head on the block, he bid the executioner stay till he had put aside his beard, for said he, that has never committed treason.

The concurrence which the people seemed to lend to these severities, added to the

great authority which Henry from his severe administration possessed, induced him to proceed still farther in his scheme of innovation. As the monks had all along shewn him the greatest resistance, he resolved at once to deprive them of future power to injure him. He accordingly empowered Cromwell, secretary of state, to send commissioners into the several counties of England to inspect the monasteries ; and to report, with rigorous exactness, the conduct and deportment of such as were resident there. This employment was readily undertaken by some creatures of the court, namely, Layton, London, Price, Gage, Petre, and Belasis, who are said to have discovered monstrous disorders in many of the religious houses. Whole convents of women abandoned to all manner of lewdness, friars accomplices in their crimes, pious frauds every where practised to increase the devotion and liberality of the people, and cruel and inveterate factions maintained between the members of many of these institutions. These accusations, whether true or false, were urged with great clamour against these communities ; and a general horror was excited in the nation against them.

The king now, therefore, thought he might with safety, and even some degree of popularity,

larity, abolish these institutions ; but willing to proceed gently at first, he gave directions to parliament to go no farther at present than to suppress the lesser monasteries, who possessed revenues below the value of two hundred pounds a-year. By this act, three hundred and seventy-six monasteries were suppressed; and their revenues, amounting to thirty-two thousand pounds a year, were granted to the king, besides their goods and plate, computed at a hundred thousand pounds more. But this was only the beginning of his confiscations ; for about two years after, he resolved upon the entire destruction of all monasteries whatsoever. A new visitation was therefore appointed, and fresh crimes were also produced ; so that his severities were conducted with such seeming justice and success, that in less than two years, he became possessed of all the monastic revenues. These, on the whole, amounted to six hundred and forty-five, of which twenty-eight had abbots, who enjoyed a seat in parliament. Ninety colleges were demolished in several counties ; two thousand three hundred and seventy-four chantries, and free chapels, and a hundred and ten hospitals. The whole revenue of these establishments amounted to one hundred and sixty-

one thousand pounds, which was about a twentieth part of the national income. The loss therefore which was sustained by the clergy upon this occasion, was by no means so great or mortifying as the cruel insults and reproaches to which they were exposed for their former frauds and avarice. The numberless reliques which they had amassed, to delude and draw money from the people, were now brought forward, and exposed before the populace with the most poignant contempt. An angel with one wing, that brought over the head of the spear that pierced the side of Christ ; coals that had roasted St. Laurence, the parings of St. Edmond's toes, certain reliques to prevent rain, others to stop the generation of weeds among corn. There was a crucifix at Boxley in Kent, distinguished by the appellation of the Rood of Grace, which had been long in reputation for bending, raising, rolling the eyes, and shaking the head. It was brought to London, and broke to pieces at Paul's Cross ; and the wheels and springs by which it was actuated shewn to the people. At Hales in Gloucestershire, the monks had carried on a profitable traffic with the pretended blood of Christ in a crystal phial. This relic was no other than the blood of a duck

duck killed weekly, and exhibited to the pilgrim; if his prayers were accepted, the blood was shewn him; if supposed to be rejected, the phial was turned; and being on one side opaque, the blood was no longer to be seen. But the spoils of St. Thomas à Becket's shrine at Canterbury exceed what even imagination might conceive. The shrine was broken down; and the gold that adorned it filled two large chests, that eight strong men could hardly carry out of the church. The king even cited the saint himself to appear, and to be tried and condemned as a traitor. He ordered his name to be struck out of the Calendar, his bones to be burned, and the office for his festival to be struck out of the Breviary. Such were the violent measures with which the king proceeded against these seats of indolence and imposture; but as great murmurs were excited upon this occasion, he took care that all those who could be useful to him, or even dangerous in cases of opposition, should be sharers in the spoil. He either made a gift of the revenues of the convents to his principal courtiers, or sold them at low prices, or exchanged them for other lands on very disadvantageous terms. He also erected six new bishoprics, Westminster, Oxford, Peterborough, Bristol,

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Chester, and Gloucester, of which the last five still continue. He also settled salaries on the abbots and priors, proportioned to their former revenues or their merits; and each monk was allowed a yearly pension of eight marks for his subsistence.

But though the king had entirely separated himself from Rome, yet he was unwilling to follow any guide in conducting a new system. He would not therefore wholly abolish those practices, by which priest-craft had been carried to such a pitch of absurdity. The invocation of saints was not yet abolished by him, but only restrained. He procured an act, or, more properly speaking, gave orders, to have the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue; but it was not permitted to be put into the hands of the laity. It was a capital crime to believe in the pope's supremacy; and yet equally heinous to be of the reformed religion, as established in Germany. His opinions were at length delivered in a law, which from its horrid consequences, was afterwards termed the Bloody Statute, by which it was ordained, that whoever, by word or writing, denied transubstantiation, whoever maintained that the communion in both kinds was necessary, whoever asserted that it was lawful for priests

priests to marry, whoever alledged that vows of chastity might be broken, whoever maintained that private masses were unprofitable, or that auricular confession was unnecessary, should be found guilty of heresy, and burned or hanged as the court should determine. As the people were at that time chiefly composed of those who followed the opinions of Luther, and such as still adhered to the pope, this statute, with Henry's former decrees, in some measure excluded both, and opened a field for persecution, which soon after produced its dreadful harvests.

These severities, however, were preceded by one of a different nature, arising neither from religious nor political causes, but merely from tyrannical caprice. Anne Bullen, his queen, had been always a favourer of the reformation, and consequently had many enemies on that account, who only waited some fit occasion to destroy her credit with the king; and that occasion presented itself but too soon. The king's passion was by this time quite palled by satiety; as the only desire he ever had for her arose from that brutal appetite, which enjoyment soon destroys, he was now fallen in love, if we may so prostitute the expression, with another, and languished

languished for the possession of Jane Seymour, who had for some time been maid of honour to the queen.

As soon as the queen's enemies perceived the king's disgust, they soon resolved on taking the first opportunity of gratifying his inclination to get rid of her, by producing crimes against her, which his passions would A.D. 1536. quickly make real. The countess of Rochford in particular, who was married to the queen's brother, herself a woman of infamous character, began with the most cruel insinuations against the reputation of her sister-in-law. She pretended that her own husband was engaged in an incestuous correspondence with his sister; and not contented with this insinuation, represented all the harmless levities of the queen as favours of a criminal nature. The king's jealousy first appeared openly in a tilting at Greenwich, where the queen happened to drop her handkerchief, as was supposed, to one of her minions to wipe his face, after having over-heated himself in the exercise. Though this might have been very harmless, the king abruptly retired from the place, and sent orders to have her confined to her apartment. Anne smiled at first, thinking the king was in jest; but when she found it was a very

serious

serious affair, she received the sacrament in her closet, sensible of what little mercy she had to expect from so furious a tyrant.

In the mean time, her enemies were not remiss in inflaming the accusation against her. The duke of Norfolk, from his attachment to the old religion, took care to produce several witnesses, accusing her of incontinency with some of the meaner servants of the court. Four persons were particularly pointed out as her paramours; Henry Norris, groom of the stole, Weston, and Brereton, gentlemen of the king's bed-chamber, together with Mark Smeton, a musician. As these had served her with much assiduity, their respect might have been construed by suspicion into more tender attachments. The next day the queen was sent to the Tower, earnestly protesting her innocence, and sending up prayers to heaven for assistance in this extremity. She in vain begged to be admitted into the presence of the king; the lady Bullen, her uncle's wife, who had always hated her, was ordered to continue in the same chamber, and she made a report of all the incoherent ravings of the afflicted prisoner. She owned that she had once rallied Norris on his delaying his marriage, and had told him that he probably expected her, when she should be

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a widow. She had reproved Weston, she said, for his affection to a kinswoman of her's, and his indifference towards his wife ; but he told her that she had mistaken the object of his affection, for it was herself. She affirmed, that Smeton had never been in her chamber but twice, when he played on the harpsichord ; but she acknowledged that he once had the boldness to tell her, that a look sufficed him.

Every person at court now abandoned the unhappy queen in her distress, except Cranmer, who, though forbid to come into the king's presence, wrote a letter to him in behalf of the queen ; but his intercession had no effect. On the twelfth day of May, Norris, Weston, Brereton, and Smeton, were tried in Westminster-hall, when Smeton was prevailed upon, by the promise of a pardon, to confess a criminal correspondence with the queen ; but he was never confronted by her he accused ; and his execution with the rest, shortly after, served to acquit her of the charge. Norris, who had been much in the king's favour, had an offer of his life, if he would confess his crime, and accuse his mistress ; but he rejected the proposal with contempt, and died professing her innocence, and his own.

In the mean time, the queen, who saw the terrible appearance of her fortunes, endeavoured to soften the king by every endeavour to spare the lives of the unfortunate men, whose deaths were decreed. But his was a stern jealousy fostered by pride ; and nothing but her removal could appease him. Her letter to him upon this occasion, written from the Tower, is full of the tenderest expostulations, and too remarkable to be omitted here ; as its manner serves at once to mark the situation of her mind, and shews to what a pitch of refinement she had carried the language even then. It is as follows.

“ Sir,

“ Your grace’s displeasure, and my imprisonment, are things so strange unto me, as what to write, or what to excuse, I am altogether ignorant. Whereas you send unto me, (willing me to confess a truth, and so obtain your favour,) by such an one, whom you know to be mine ancient professed enemy, I no sooner received this message by him, than I rightly conceived your meaning ; and if, as you say, confessing a truth indeed may procure my safety, I shall with all willingness and duty perform your command.

“ But

“ But let not your grace ever imagine that your poor wife will ever be brought to acknowledge a fault, where not so much as a thought thereof preceded. And to speak a truth, never prince had wife more loyal in all duty, and in all true affection, than you have ever found in Anne Boleyn. With which name and place I could willingly have contented myself, if God and your grace’s pleasure had been so pleased. Neither did I at any time so far forget myself in my exaltation, or received queenship, but that I always looked for such an alteration as I now find ; for the ground of my preferment being on no surer foundation than your grace’s fancy, the least alteration I knew was fit and sufficient to draw that fancy to some other object. You have chosen me from a low estate to be your queen and companion, far beyond my desert or desire. If then you have found me worthy of such honour, good your grace, let not any light fancy, or bad council of mine enemies, withdraw your princely favour from me ; neither let that stain, that unworthy stain of a disloyal heart towards your good grace, ever cast so foul a blot on your most dutiful wife, and the infant princess your daughter. Try me, good king ; but let me have a lawful trial, and let

not

not my sworn enemies fit as my accusers and judges ; yea let me receive an open trial, for my truth shall fear no open shame ; then shall you see either mine innocence cleared, your suspicion and conscience satisfied, the ignominy and slander of the world stopped, or my guilt openly declared. So that whatsoever God or you may determine of me, your grace may be freed from an open censure ; and mine offence being so lawfully proved, your grace is at liberty both before God and man, not only to execute worthy punishment on me, as an unlawful wife, but to follow your affection already settled on that party, for whose sake I am now as I am, whose name I could some good while since have pointed unto your grace, not being ignorant of my suspicion therein.

“ But if you have already determined of me, and that not only my death, but an infamous slander must bring you the enjoying your desired happiness, then I desire of God that he will pardon your great sin therein, and likewise mine enemies, the instruments thereof ; and that he will not call you to a strict account for your unprincely and cruel usage of me, at his general judgement seat, where both you and myself must shortly appear, and in whose

whose judgement I doubt not (whatsoever the world may think of me) mine innocence shall be openly known and sufficiently cleared.

“ My last and only request shall be, that myself may only bear the burden of your grace’s displeasure ; and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen, who (as I understand) are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found favour in your sight, if ever the name of Anne Boleyn hath been pleasing in your ears, then let me obtain this request ; and I will so leave to trouble your grace any farther, with mine earnest prayers to the Trinity, to have your grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your actions. From my doleful prison in the Tower, this sixth of May.

Your most loyal
and ever faithful wife,
Anne Boleyn.”

It was not to be expected that eloquence could prevail on a tyrant, whose passions were to be influenced by none of the nobler motives : the queen and her brother were tried by a jury of peers ; but upon what proof or pretence the crime of incest was urged against them is unknown ; the chief evidence, it is said, amounted

amounted to no more, than that Rochford had been seen to lean on her bed before some company. Part of the charge against her was, that she had declared to her attendants, that the king never had her heart; which was considered as a slander upon the throne, and strained into a breach of a late statute, by which it was declared criminal to throw any slander upon the king, queen, or their issue. The unhappy queen, though unassisted by counsel, defended herself with great judgment, and presence of mind; and the spectators could not forbear declaring her entirely innocent. She answered distinctly to all the charges brought against her: but the king's authority was not to be controvuled; she was declared guilty; and her sentence ran, that she should be burned or beheaded at the king's pleasure. When this terrible sentence was pronounced against her, she could not help offering up a prayer to Heaven, vindicating her innocence; and in a most pathetic speech to her judges, averred the injustice of her condemnation. But the tyrant, not satisfied with this vengeance, was desirous also of having her daughter declared illegitimate; and remembering the report of a contract between her and Percy, earl of Northumberland, prevailed upon the queen, either

by promise of life, or of executing the sentence in all its rigour, to confess such a contract. The afflicted primate, who sat as judge, thought himself obliged, by this confession, to pronounce the marriage null and invalid; and Henry, in the transports of his malignant prosecution did not see, that if her marriage had been invalid from the beginning, the sentence for adultery must have been invalid also.

She, who had been once the envied object of royal favour, was now going to give a melancholy instance of the capriciousness of fortune: upon her returning to prison, she once more sent protestations of her innocence to the king. “ You have raised me, said she, from privacy to make me a lady; from a lady you made me a countess; from a countess, a queen; and from a queen I shall shortly become a saint in heaven.” On the morning of her execution, she sent for Kingstone, the keeper of the Tower, to whom, upon entering the prison, she said, “ Mr. Kingstone, I hear I am not to die till noon, and I am sorry for it; for I thought to be dead before this time, and free from a life of pain.” The keeper attempting to comfort her, by assuring her the pain would be very little, she replied, “ I have heard the executioner is very expert; and

(clasping

(clasping her neck with her hands, laughing,) I have but a little neck." When brought to the scaffold, from a consideration of her child Elizabeth's welfare, she would not enflame the minds of the spectators against her prosecutors, but contented herself with saying, "that she was come to die as she was sentenced by the law." She would accuse none, nor say any thing of the ground upon which she was judged; she prayed heartily for the king, and called him "a most merciful, and gentle prince; that he had always been to her a good and gracious sovereign; and that if any one should think proper to canvass her cause, she desired him to judge the best." She was beheaded by the executioner of Calais, who was brought over as much more expert than any in England. Her body was negligently thrown into a common chest of elm tree, made to hold arrows, and was buried in the Tower. Anne Bullen seemed to be guilty of no other crime, than that of having survived the king's affections; and although many crowned heads were already put to death in England, she was the first that underwent all the forms of law, and was beheaded on a scaffold.

The people, in general, beheld her fate with pity; but still more, when they discovered the

cause of the tyrant's impatience to destroy her; for the very next day after her execution, he married the lady Jane Seymour, his cruel heart being no way softened by the wretched fate of one that had been so lately the object of his warmest affections. He also ordered his parliament to give him a divorce between her sentence and execution; and thus he endeavoured to bastardize Elizabeth, the only child he had by her, as he had in the same manner formerly bastardized Mary, his only child by queen Catharine.

It is easy to imagine, that such various innovations, and capricious cruelties, were not felt by the people without indignation; but their murmurs were fruitless, and their complaints disregarded. Henry now made himself umpire between those of the ancient superstition, and the modern reformation; both looked up to him for assistance, and at mutual enmity with each other, he took the advantage of all. Beside, he had all the powerful men of the nation on his side, by the many grants he had made them of the lands and goods of which he had despoiled the monasteries. It was easy for him, therefore, to quell the various insurrections which his present arbitrary conduct produced, as they were neither headed by any powerful

powerful man, nor conducted with any kind of foresight, but merely the tumultuary efforts of anguish and despair. The first rising was in Lincolnshire, headed by doctor Mackrel, prior of Barlings ; and though this tumultuary army amounted to twenty thousand men, upon a proclamation being made, with assurances of pardon, the populace dispersed ; and Mackrel, with some more of the leaders, falling into the king's hands, were put to death. Another rising followed soon after, in the North, amounting to above forty thousand men, who were preceded by priests, carrying the ensigns of their function before the army ; and all seeming chiefly inspired with an enmity against Cromwell, whom they considered as the instigator of the king's severities. But these also were soon dispersed upon finding their provisions grown short ; after having in vain endeavoured to attack the duke of Norfolk's army, which was sent against them, and from which they were separated by a rivulet that was swoln by heavy rains. A new insurrection broke out shortly after, headed by Musgrave and Tilby ; but the insurgents were dispersed and put to flight by the duke of Norfolk. Besides, one Aske, a gentleman of that part of the country, who led the first in-

surrection, lord Darcy, sir Robert Constable, sir John Bulmer, sir Thomas Percy, sir Stephen Hamilton, Nicholas Tempest, and William Lumley, were thrown into prison, condemned, and executed. Henry, enraged by multiplied revolts, was resolved to put no bounds to his severities; and the birth of a prince, afterwards Edward the Sixth, and the death of the queen, who survived this joyful occasion but two days, made but a small pause in the fierce severity with which those were treated who were found to oppose his will.

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1537.

In the midst of these commotions, the fires of Smithfield were seen to blaze with unusual fierceness. Those who adhered to the pope, or those who followed the doctrines of Luther, were equally the objects of royal vengeance, and ecclesiastical persecution. From the multiplied alterations which were made in the national systems of belief, mostly drawn up by Henry himself, few knew what to think, or what to profess. They were ready enough, indeed, to follow his doctrines, how inconsistent or contradictory soever; but as he was continually changing them himself, they could hardly pursue so fast as he advanced before them. Thomas Cromwell, raised by the king's caprice, from being a blacksmith's son, to be

a royal favourite, for tyrants ever raise their favourites from the lowest of the people, together with Cranmer, now become archbishop of Canterbury, were both seen to favour the reformation with all their endeavours. On the other hand, Gardiner bishop of Winchester, together with the duke of Norfolk, were for leading the king back to his original superstition. In fact, Henry submitted to neither; his pride had long been so enflamed by flattery, that he thought himself entitled to regulate, by his own single opinion, the religious faith of the whole nation.

In this universal terror and degeneracy of mankind, during which the severities of one man alone was sufficient to keep millions in awe, there seemed to be a poor school-master in London, who boldly stood up for the rights of humanity, and ventured to think for himself. This man's name was John Lambert, who hearing doctor Taylor preach upon the real presence in the sacrament, presented him with his reasons for contradicting that doctrine. The paper was carried to Cranmer and Latimer, who were then of the opinion of Luther on that head, and endeavoured to bring him over to their opinions. But Lambert remained steady in his belief; and they were mortified

fied when, instead of recanting, he appealed to the king himself. This was a challenge that pleased Henry's vanity, and willing at once to exert his supremacy, and display his learning, he accepted the appeal; and public notice was given of his intended disputation. For this purpose, scaffolds were erected in Westminster-hall for the accommodation of the audience; and Henry appeared on his throne, accompanied with all the ensigns of majesty. The prelates were placed on his right hand, the temporal peers on his left. The judges, and most eminent lawyers, had a place assigned them behind the bishops; the courtiers of the greatest distinction, behind the peers. Poor Lambert was produced in the midst of this splendid assembly, with not one creature to defend or support him. The bishop of Chester opened the conference by declaring, that the king, notwithstanding any slight alterations he had made in the rites of the church, was yet determined to maintain the purity of the catholic faith; and to punish, with the utmost severity, all departure from it. After this preamble, sufficient to terrify the boldest disputant, the king asked Lambert, with a stern countenance, what his opinion was of transubstantiation. When Lambert began his oration

tion with a compliment to his majesty, Henry rejected his praise with disdain and indignation. He afterwards entered upon the discussion of that abstruse question ; and endeavoured to press Lambert with some arguments, drawn from the scriptures and the schoolmen. At every word the audience were ready to second him with their applause and admiration. Lambert, however, no way discouraged, was not slow to reply ; but here Cranmer stept in and seconded the king's proofs by some new topics. Gardiner entered the lists in support of Cranmer ; Tonstal took up the argument after Gardiner ; Stokesly brought fresh aid to Tonstal. Six bishops more appeared successively in the field against the poor solitary disputator, who, for five hours, long attempted to vindicate his doctrines, till at last fatigued, confounded, brow-beaten, and abashed, he was reduced to silence. The king then returning to the charge, demanded if he was convinced ; and whether he chose to gain life by recantation, or to die for his obstinacy ? Lambert, no way intimidated, replied, that he cast himself wholly on his majesty's clemency ; to which Henry replied, " that he would never protect a heretic ; and, therefore, if that was his final answer, he must expect to be

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committed to the flames." Lambert, no way terrified, heard Cromwell read the sentence, by which he was condemned to be burnt alive, with the utmost composure; and as if his persecutors were resolved to try his fortitude, the executioners were ordered to make his punishment as painful as they could. He was, therefore, burned at a slow fire, his legs and thighs being first consumed; and when there appeared no end of his tortures, some of the guards, more merciful than the rest, lifted him on their halberts; and while he yet continued to cry out, "None but Christ! None but Christ!" he was wholly consumed by the surrounding fire.

This poor man's death seemed to be only a signal for that of many more. Adulation had whispered the king with such an opinion of his own ability, that he now resolved to punish rigorously all those who should presume to differ from him in point of opinion, without making any distinction between Catholic or Lutheran. Soon after, no less than five hundred persons were imprisoned for contradicting the opinions delivered in the bloody statute; and received protection only from the lenity of Cromwell. For some time, also, doctor Barnes, who had been instrumental in

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Lambert's execution, felt, in his turn, the severity of the persecuting spirit; and by a bill in parliament, without any trial, was condemned to the flames, discussing theological questions at the very stake. With Barnes were executed one Gerrard, and Jerome, for the same opinions. Three Catholics, also, whose names were Abel, Fetherstone, and Powel, were dragged upon the same hurdles to execution; and declared, that the most grievous part of their punishment, was the being coupled with such heretical miscreants as were united in the same calamity.

During these horrid transactions, Henry was resolved to take another queen, and, after some negociation upon the continent, he contracted a marriage with Anne of Cleves, his aim being by her means to fortify his alliances with the princes of Germany. Nor was he led into this match without a most scrupulous examination on his side, of the lady's personal accomplishments. He was assured by his envoy that she was of a very large person, which was the more pleasing to him, as he was at that time himself become very corpulent, and consequently required a similar figure in a wife. He was still farther allured by her picture, in which Holbein, who drew it, was, it seems,

more

more a friend to his art than to truth ; for he greatly flattered her. The king, therefore, upon her landing, went privately to meet her at Rochester, where he was very much damped in his amorous ardour. He found her big indeed, and tall as he could wish ; but utterly devoid of grace and beauty ; she could also speak but one language, her native German ; so that her conversation could never recompence the defects of her person. He swore she was a great Flanders mare ; and added that he could never settle his affections upon her. However, sensible that he would greatly disoblige her brother the duke, and consequently all the German princes in his alliance, he resolved to marry her ; and he told Cromwell, who was chiefly instrumental in this affair, that since he had gone so far, he would put his neck into the yoke, whatever it cost him. The marriage was accordingly celebrated ; but the king's disgust was only increased by it ; he told Cromwell the next morning, that he hated her more than ever ; and even suspected her not to be a true maid, a circumstance in which he thought himself extremely skilful. Cromwell saw the danger he incurred by having been instrumental in forming this union ; but he endeavoured by

his assiduity, and humble adulation, to keep the king from coming to extremities with him.

But he should have known that a tyrant once offended is implacable. Henry's aversion to the queen secretly increased every day; and he at length resolved to get rid of her, and his prime minister together. The fall of this favourite was long and ardently wished for by a great part of the nation. The nobility hated a man, who from such mean beginnings, was placed before the first persons in the kingdom; for besides being made vicar-general, which gave him almost absolute authority over the clergy, he was lord privy-seal, lord chamberlain, and master of the wards. He had also obtained the order of the Garter, a dignity which had hitherto been only conferred on the most illustrious families; and to carry his exaltation still higher, he had been made earl of Essex. The protestants disliked him for his concurrence with the king's will in their persecution; and the papists detested him, as the inveterate enemy of their religion. It only remained, therefore, with the king to hasten or retard the punishment of a man, who, had scarce a partizan in the nation, except himself. But he had a strong cause of dislike to him for his late unpropitious alliance; and

a new

a new motive was soon added for increasing his displeasure. He had fixed his affection on Catharine Howard, niece to the duke of Norfolk; and the only method of gratifying this new passion was, as in former cases, discarding the present queen to make room for a new one. The duke of Norfolk had long been Cromwell's mortal enemy, and eagerly embraced this opportunity to destroy a man he considered as his rival. He therefore made use of all his niece's arts to ruin the favourite; and when his project was ripe for execution, he obtained a commission from the king to arrest Cromwell for high treason. His disgrace was no sooner known, than all his friends forsook him, except Cranmer, who wrote such a letter to Henry in his behalf, as no other man in the kingdom would have presumed to offer. However, he was accused in parliament of heresy and treason; and without being ever heard in his own defence, condemned to suffer the pains of death, as the king should think proper to direct. Cromwell's fortitude seemed to forsake him in this dreadful exigency. He wrote to the king for pardon; said, that the frail flesh incited him continually to apply to his grace for mercy, and subscribed his epistle with a heavy heart, and a trembling hand,

hand, “from the king’s most miserable prisoner and poor slave at the Tower, Thomas Cromwell. Mercy, mercy, mercy.”

Cromwell’s letter touched the hard heart of the monarch ; he ordered it to be read to him three times ; and then, as if willing to gain a victory over all his softer feelings, he signed the warrant for beheading him upon Tower-Hill. When he was brought to the scaffold, his regard for his son hindered him from expatiating upon his own innocence ; he thanked God for bringing him to that death for his transgressions, confessed he had often been seduced, but that he now died in the catholic faith. It was thus that Henry, not satisfied with the death of those whom he chose to punish, repressed their complaints also ; and terrified the unhappy sufferers from the last consolation of the wretched, the satisfaction of upbraiding their persecutors. In this manner, the unhappy sufferer having spent some time in his private devotions, submitted his neck to the executioner, who mangled him in a most terrible manner. A few days after his death, a number of people were executed together upon very different accusations. Some for having denied the king’s supremacy, and others for having maintained the doctrines of Luther.

About

About a month after the death of Cromwell, the king declared his marriage with Catharine Howard, whom he had some time before privately espoused. This was regarded as a very favourable incident by the catholic party ; and the subsequent events for a while turned out to their wish. The king's councils being now entirely directed by Norfolk and Gardiner, a furious persecution commenced against the protestants ; and the law of the six articles was executed with rigour ; so that a foreigner, who was then residing in England, had reason to say, that those who were against the pope were burned, and those who were for him were hanged. The king, with an ostentatious impartiality, reduced both parties to an equal share of subordination, and infused terror into every breast.

But the measure of his severities was not yet filled up. He had thought himself very happy in his new marriage. He was so captivated with the queen's accomplishments, that he gave public thanks for his felicity, and desired his confessor to join with him in the same thanksgiving. This joy, however, was of very short duration. While the king was at York, upon an intended conference with the King of Scotland, a man of the name of Lafsels

sels had waited upon Cranmer at London ; and from the information of this man's sister, who had been servant to the duchess-dowager of Norfolk, he gave a very surprising account of the queen's incontinence. He averred that she led a very lewd life before her marriage, and had carried on a scandalous correspondence with two men, called Derham and Mannock ; and that she continued to indulge herself in the same criminal pleasures since she had been raised to her present greatness. Cranmer was equally surprised and embarrassed at this intelligence, which he communicated to the chancellor, and some other members of the privy-council, who advised him to make the king acquainted with the whole affair on his return to London. The archbishop knew the hazards he ran by intermeddling in such delicate points ; but he also knew the dangers he incurred by suppressing his information. He therefore resolved to communicate what he had heard to writing, in the form of a memorial ; and this he shortly after delivered into the king's own hand, desiring his majesty to read it in private. Henry at first disbelieved, or pretended to disbelieve the report ; he ordered the keeper of the privy-seal to examine Lascelles, who persisted in his former narrative ;

tive ; and even produced his sister to confirm his account. Upon this, Derham and Mannock were arrested ; and they quickly confessed their own guilt, and the queen's incontinency. They went still farther, by impeaching the old lady Rochford, who had formerly been so instrumental in procuring the death of Anne Bullen. They alledged that this lady had introduced one Culpepper into the queen's bed-chamber, who stayed with her from eleven at night till four in the morning. When the queen was first examined relative to her crime, she denied the charge ; but afterwards finding that her accomplices were her accusers, she confessed her incontinence before marriage, but denied her having dishonoured the king's bed since their union. But three maids of honour, who were admitted to her secrets, still farther alledged her guilt ; and some of them confessed having past the night in the same bed with her and her lovers. The king was so affected at this discovery, that he burst into a flood of tears, and bitterly lamented his misfortune. Derham, Mannock, and Culpepper, were convicted and executed ; but he was resolved to throw the odium of the queen's death upon the parliament, who had always shewn themselves the ready ministers of all his severities.

These

These servile creatures, upon being informed of the queen's crime and confession, found her quickly guilty, and petitioned the king that she might be punished with death ; that the same penalty might be inflicted on the lady Rochford, the accomplice of her debaucheries ; and that her grand-mother, the duchess dowager of Norfolk, together with her father, mother, and nine others, men and women, as having been privy to the queen's irregularities, should participate in her punishment. With this petition the king was most graciously pleased to agree ; they were condemned to death by an act of attainder, which, at the same time, made it capital for all persons to conceal their knowledge of the debaucheries of any future queen. It was also enacted, that if the king married any woman who had been incontinent, taking her for a true maid, she should be guilty of treason, in case she did not perviously reveal her guilt. The people made merry with this absurd and brutal statute ; and it was said, that the king must henceforth look out for a widow. After all these laws were passed, in which the most wonderful circumstance is, that a body of men could ever be induced to give their consent, the queen was beheaded

headed on Tower-Hill, together with the lady Rochford, who found no great degree of compassion, as she had herself before tampered in blood. The queen was more pitied, as she owned that she had led a dissolute life before marriage; but denied in her last moments, and with the utmost solemnity, that she had ever been untrue since her marriage with the king. The public exclaimed so loudly against the severity of the act, which brought in so many accomplices of her guilt, that the king did not think proper to execute sentence upon them, though some of them were long detained in confinement.

Henry having thus, by various acts of tyranny, shewn that he was abandoned to all ideas of justice, morals, or humanity, at last took it into his head to compose a book of religion, which was to be the code by which his subjects should for the future regulate all their belief and actions. Having procured an act of parliament for this purpose, in which A. D. 1541. all spiritual supremacy was declared to be vested in him, he published a small volume soon after, called the Institution of a Christian Man, which was received by the convocation, and voted to be the infallible standard of orthodoxy. All the abstruse points of justification,

tion, faith, free-will, good works, and grace, are there defined with a leaning towards the opinion of the reformers; while the sacraments, which a few years before were only allowed to be three, are there increased to their original number of seven, conformable to the sentiments of the catholics. But the king was not long satisfied with this code of belief; for he soon after procured a new book to be composed, called *The Erudition of a Christian Man*, which he published upon his own authority; and though this new creed differed a great deal from the former, yet he was no less positive in requiring assent to this, than he had been to the former. In both these books he was very explicit in enforcing the doctrine of passive obedience; so that his institutions were not likely to weaken what he so powerfully enforced by his severities.

But his authority in religion was not more uncontrolled than in temporal concerns. An alderman, one Read, who had refused to assist him with a benevolence, was pressed as a private centinel, and sent to serve in an army which was levied against an incursion of the Scots. In this manner, all who opposed his will, were either pressed or imprisoned, happy if they escaped with such slight punishments. His

parliament made a law, by which the king's proclamations were to have the same force as statutes ; and to facilitate the execution of this act, by which all shadow of liberty was totally removed, they appointed that any nine of the privy council should form a legal court for punishing all disobedience to all proclamations. Thus the king was empowered to issue a proclamation to destroy the lives, or take away the properties, of any of his subjects ; and the only redress was to himself in council.

In about a year after the death of the last A.D. 1543. queen, Henry once more changed his condition, by marrying his sixth and last wife, Catharine Parr, who, according to the ridiculous suggestions of the people, was, in fact, a widow. She was the wife of the late lord Latimer ; and was considered as a woman of discretion and virtue. She was already passed the meridian of life, and managed this capricious tyrant's temper with prudence and success. His amiable days had long been over : he was almost choaked with fat, and had contracted a morose air, very far from inspiring affection. Nevertheless, this woman, sacrificing her appetites to her ambition, so far prevailed in gaining his confidence, that she was appointed regent of the kingdom during his

his absence in France, whither he passed over at the head of thirty thousand men, to prosecute a war which had been declared between him and the French king. He there behaved, as in all his former undertakings, with ineffectual ostentation. Instead of marching into the heart of the country, he sat down before Boulogne, which was obliged to capitulate; and his ally, the emperor, making a separate peace, Henry was obliged to return with his army into England, where he found his subjects ready to offer him their accustomed adulation, and to praise him for an enterprise in which, at an infinite charge, he had made an acquisition that was of no manner of benefit.

But of all his subjects none seemed more abandoned, and basely servile than the parliament, which it might have been reasonably supposed would rather be the protectors of the people than the slaves of the crown. Upon his return from his expensive French expedition, after professions of the greatest submission and profound acknowledgement, they granted him a subsidy equal to his demands, and added to it a gift, which will make their memory odious to the most distant posterity. By one vote they bestowed upon him all the revenues

of the two universities, as well as of some other places of education and public worship. But rapacious as this monarch was, he refrained from dispoiling those venerable seminaries of their ancient endowments; however they owed their safety to his lenity, and not to the protection of this base and degenerate parliament. Nor was he less just upon another occasion with regard to the suggestions of his council, who had long conceived an hatred against Cranmer, and laboured to destroy him. This just and moderate man had all along owed his safety to his integrity; and scorning intrigue himself, was therefore the less liable to be circumvented by the intrigues of others. The catholic party had long represented to the king that Cranmer was the secret cause of most of the divisions which tore the nation, as his example and support were the chief props of heresy. Henry seeing the point to which they tended, and desirous of knowing how far they would carry their intrigues, feigned a compliance with their wishes, and ordered the council to make enquiry into the primate's conduct and crimes. All the world therefore concluded that his disgrace was certain, and his death inevitable. His old friends who, from mercenary motives,

had

had been attached to him, now began to treat him with mortifying neglect ; he was obliged to stand several hours among the servants at the door of the council-chamber before they deigned to admit him ; and he made his appearance among them only to be informed that they had determined to send him to the Tower. But Cranmer was not to be intimidated by their menaces ; he appealed to the king ; and when that was denied him, he produced a ring, which Henry had given him, to make use of upon that emergency. The council was confounded ; and still more so, when, in the presence of the king, they found themselves severely reproved, and Cranmer taken into more than former favour. Henry obliged them all to embrace, as a sign of their reconciliation ; and Cranmer, from his gentle nature, rendered this reconciliation more sincere on his part than is usual in such forced compliances.

Still, however, the king's severity to the rest of his subjects continued as fierce as ever. For some time he had been incommoded by an ulcer in his leg ; the pain of which, added to his corpulence, and other infirmities, increased his natural irascibility to such a degree, that scarce any, of even his domestics, approached him

him without terror. It was not to be expected, therefore, that any who differed from him in opinion, should, at this time particularly, hope for pardon. Among the many whose unmerited sufferings excite our pity and indignation, the fate of Anne Askew deserves to be particularly remembered. This lady was a woman of merit as well as beauty, and connected with many of the principal ladies at court. It is said that she kept up a correspondence with the queen herself, who secretly favoured the reformation ; and this correspondence only served to hasten this poor woman's ruin, the chancellor being known to be her enemy. However this be, she happened to differ from the established code of belief, particularly in the article of the real presence ; and, notwithstanding the weakness of her sex and age, she was thrown into prison, and accused of heresy. In this situation, with courage far beyond what might be expected, she employed her time in composing prayers and discourses, and vindicating the truth of her opinions. The chancellor, who was much attached to the catholic party, was sent to examine her with regard to her abettors at court ; but the maintained the utmost secrecy, and would accuse none. In consequence of this contumacy, as it

it was called, the poor young lady was put to the torture; but she still continued resolute, and her silence testified her contempt of their petty cruelties. The chancellor, therefore, became outrageous, and ordered the lieutenant of the Tower, who executed this punishment, to stretch the rack still harder; which he refusing to do, and, though menaced, still persisted in a refusal; the chancellor, intoxicated with religious zeal, grasped the cords himself, and drew it so violently that the woman's body was almost torn asunder. But her constancy was greater than the barbarity of her persecutors; so that, finding no other method to subdue her, she was condemned to be burned alive. She received this sentence with a transport of joy, and as a release from a state of the greatest pain to the greatest felicity. As all her joints had been dislocated by the rack, so that she could not stand, she was carried to the place of execution in a chair. Together with her, were brought Nicholas Belenian, a priest, John Laffals of the king's household, and John Adams a taylor, who had all been condemned for the same crime. They were tied to the stake; and in that dreadful situation informed, that upon recanting, they should be granted their lives. But they re-

fused a life that was to be gained by such prostitution ; and they saw, with tranquillity, the executioner kindle the flames which consumed them.

From this indiscriminate severity the queen was not herself entirely secure. She had for some time attended the king in his indisposition, and endeavoured to sooth him by her arts and assiduity. His favourite topic of conversation was theology ; and Catharine, who was tinctured with the spirit of the times, would now and then enter into a debate with him, upon many speculative tenets, that were then in agitation between the Catholics and Lutherans. Henry, highly provoked that she should presume to differ from him, made complaints of her obstinacy to Gardiner, who gladly laid hold of the opportunity to inflame the quarrel. Even articles of impeachment were drawn up against her, which were brought to the king by the chancellor to be signed ; but in returning home, he happened to drop the paper. It was very lucky for the queen, that the person who found it was in her interests ; it was immediately carried to her, and the contents soon made her sensible of the danger to which she was exposed. In this exigence, she was resolved to work upon the king ; and paying him her customary visit, he
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led her, as usual, to the subject of theology, which at first she seemed to decline, but in which she afterwards engaged, as if merely to gratify his inclinations. In the course of her conversation, however, she gave him to know, that her whole aim in talking, was to receive his instructions, and not to controvert them; that it was not for her to set her opinions in opposition to those that served to direct the nation; but she alledged, she could not help trying every art that could induce the king to exert that eloquence which served, for the time, to mitigate his bodily pain. Henry seemed charmed at this discovery; "And is it so, sweet heart, cried he, then we are perfect friends again." Just after this reconciliation, the chancellor made his appearance, with a party of forty pursuivants at his heels, prepared to take the queen into custody. But the king advanced to meet him; and seemed to expostulate with him in the severest terms. The queen could overhear the terms, knave, fool, and beast, which he very liberally bestowed upon that magistrate; and his being ordered to depart. When he was gone, she interposed in his defence; but the king could not help saying, " Poor soul, you know not how little entitled this man is to your good offices." From thence-

forth the queen was careful not to offend Henry's humour by contradiction ; she was contented to suffer the divines to dispute, and the executioner to destroy. The fires accordingly were kindled against the heretics of both sides, as usual ; during which dreadful exhibitions, the king would frequently assemble the houses of parliament, and harangue them with florid orations, in which he would aver, that never prince had a greater affection for his people ; nor ever people had a greater affection for their king. In every pause of these extraordinary orations, some of his creatures, near his person, would begin to applaud ; and this was followed by loud acclamations, from all the rest of the audience.

But though his health was declining apace, yet his implacable cruelties were not the less frequent. His resentments were diffused indiscriminately to all ; at one time a protestant, and at another a catholic, were the objects of his severity. The duke of Norfolk and his son, the earl of Surry, were the last that felt the justice of the tyrant's "groundless suspicions. The duke was a nobleman who had served the king with talents and fidelity ; his son was a young man of the most promising hopes, who excelled in every accomplishment that became

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a scholar, a courtier, and a soldier. He excelled in all the military exercises which were then in request ; he encouraged the fine arts by his practice and example ; and it is remarkable, that he was the first who brought our language, in his poetical pieces, to any degree of refinement. He celebrated the fair Geraldina in all his sonnets, and maintained her superior beauty in all places of public contention. These qualifications, however, were no safeguard to him against Henry's suspicions ; he had dropt some expressions of resentment against the king's ministers, upon being displaced from the government of Boulogne ; and the whole family was become obnoxious from the late incontinency of Catharine Howard, the queen, who was executed. From these motives, therefore, private orders were given to arrest the father and son ; and accordingly they were arrested both on the same day, and confined to the Tower. Surry being a commoner, his trial was the more expeditious ; and as to proofs, there were many informers base enough to betray the intimacies of private confidence and all the connections of blood. The duchess dowager of Richmond, Surry's own sister, enlisted herself among the number of his accusers ; and Sir Richard Southwell also, his
most

most intimate friend, charged him with infidelity to the king. It would seem, that at this dreary period, there was neither faith nor honour to be found in all the nation ; Surry denied the charge, and challenged his accuser to single combat. This favour was refused him ; and it was alledged, that he had quartered the arms of Edward the Confessor on his escutcheon, which alone was sufficient to convict him of aspiring to the crown. To this he could make no reply ; and indeed any answer would have been needless, for neither parliaments nor juries, during this reign, seemed to be guided by any other proofs but the will of the crown. This young nobleman was, therefore condemned for high treason, notwithstanding his eloquent and spirited defence ; and the sentence was soon after executed upon him on Tower-Hill. In the mean time the duke endeavoured to mollify the king by letters and submissions ; but the monster's hard heart was rarely subject to tender impressions. The parliament meeting on the fourteenth day of January, A.D. 1546. a bill of attainder was found against the duke of Norfolk ; as it was thought he could not so easily have been convicted on a fair hearing by his peers. The only crime that his accusers could alledge against him was, that he had once said, that

that the king was sickly, and could not hold out long ; and the kingdom was likely to be torn between the contending parties of different persuasions. Cranmer, though engaged for many years in an opposite party to Norfolk, and though he had received many and great injuries from him, would have no hand in so unjust a prosecution ; but retired to his seat at Croydon. However, the death-warrant was made out, and immediately sent to the lieutenant of the Tower. The duke prepared for death, the following morning was to be his last ; but an event of greater consequence to the kingdom intervened, and prevented his execution.

The king had been for some time approaching fast towards his end ; and for several days all those about his person plainly saw that his speedy death was inevitable. The disorder in his leg was now grown extremely painful ; and this, added to his monstrous corpulency, which rendered him unable to stir, made him more furious than a chained lion. He had been ever stern and severe ; he was now outrageous. In this state he had continued for near four years before his death, the terror of all, and the tormentor of himself ; his courtiers having no inclination to make an enemy of him, as

they were more ardently employed in conspiring the death of each other. In this manner, therefore, he was suffered to struggle, without any of his domestics having the courage to warn him of his approaching end, as more than once during this reign, persons had been put to death for foretelling the death of the king. At last, sir Anthony Denny had the courage to disclose to him this dreadful secret; and, contrary to his usual custom, he received the tidings with an expression of resignation. His anguish and remorse was at this time greater than can be expressed; he desired that Cranmer might be sent for; but before that prelate could arrive, he was speechless. Cranmer desiring him to give some sign of his dying in the faith of Christ, he squeezed his hand, and immediately expired, after a reign of thirty-seven years, and nine months, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. Some kings have been tyrants from contradiction and revolt; some from being misled by favourites, and some from a spirit of party. But Henry was cruel from a depraved disposition alone; cruel in government, cruel in religion, and cruel in his family. Our divines have taken some pains to vindicate the character of this brutal prince, as if his conduct, and our reformation, had

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had any connexion with each other. There is nothing so absurd as to defend the one by the other; the most noble designs are brought about by the most vicious instruments; for we see even that cruelty and injustice were thought necessary to be employed in our holy redemption.

With regard to foreign states, Henry made some expeditions into France, which were attended with vast expence to the nation, and brought them no kind of advantage. However, he all along maintained an intercourse of friendship with Francis, which appeared disinterested and sincere. Against the Scots he was rather more successful; his generals having worsted their incurvive armies on several occasions. They particularly gained a signal advantage, besides that already related of Flodden-field, at a place near Pinkey-House, in which near ten thousand Scots were slain. But that which gave England the greatest ascendency over that nation, was the spirit of concord which soon after seemed to prevail between the two kingdoms; and that seemed to pave the way for their being in time united under the same sovereign. There were ten parliaments summoned in this reign, and twenty-three sessions held; but the whole time

in which these parliaments sat, during this long reign, did not exceed three years and a half. The foreign commerce of England, during this age, was mostly confined to the Netherlands. The merchants of the Low-Countries bought the English commodities, and distributed them into the other parts of Europe. These commodities, however, were generally little more than the natural productions of the country, without any manufactures; for it must be observed at this time that foreign artificers much surpassed the English in dexterity, industry, and frugality; and it is said that at one time not less than fifteen thousand artizans of the Flemish nation alone were settled in London.

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